

Sweet Configurations: Feminine Figures and Culinary Creativity in *Chatelaine* and Margaret
Atwood's *The Edible Woman*

A Thesis Submitted to the College of
Graduate Studies and Research
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts
in the Department of English
University of Saskatchewan
Saskatoon

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ABSTRACT

My thesis focuses on the way in which a reading of *Chatelaine*, a Canadian women's magazine, between 1959-1969 informs an interpretation of Margaret Atwood's first published novel, *The Edible Woman*. The late 1950s and 1960s were a defining period for women, and this was reflected in *Chatelaine*. The notion that a domestic life was ideal for women was beginning to erode, as women entered the workplace in greater numbers. Firmly rooted in the reality of its time, *The Edible Woman* expresses the effects of femininity in a state flux. In this thesis, I focus on the novel's main character Marian who experiences a gradual crisis as she becomes aware of her future at a dead-end office job, as a wife, and likely as a mother. In the novel, the body becomes one of the primary sites through which the crisis of femininity is experienced. My thesis argues that *Chatelaine's* pervasive diet and body image articles and advertisements expressed the fear of the potential for women's bodies to grow and transform beyond their control, and that dieting was offered as a way to both confine and define the self. The tension between the civilized and the grotesque body evident in *Chatelaine* finds fictional expression in the novel through the story of Marian as she becomes increasingly frightened of food and the female body. This thesis also explores baking content in the magazine as a means of interpreting Marian's edible creation. In the magazine, the idea of a woman baking and serving a cake to a loved one is deeply tied to femininity. Atwood parodies this cultural construction of femininity in the final scenes of the novel. True to the realist genre, Atwood's depiction of a young woman's evasion of her own maturing body and her role in society do reflect the ideology of the times. Yet, Atwood blends realism with elements of the grotesque and gothic already present in popular culture in order to illuminate some of society's more frightening or humorous beliefs.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to my supervisor Dr. Hilary Clark for her guidance, patience, and enlightening reading suggestions. Thank you to my committee members, Dr. Marie Lovrod, Dr. Nancy Van Styvendale, and Dr. Lisa Smith, whose close readings, critical questions, and insights helped me to see my thesis in new light. Thanks to Graduate Chairs past and present, Dr. Peter Hynes and Dr. Lisa Vargo, for being helpful and kind. Thank you also to Dr. Ron Cooley for first introducing me to *The Edible Woman*.

Thank you to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, the College of Graduate Studies and Research Graduate Student Support Program, and Susan Willigar and family. I am deeply grateful for their generous funding.

Thanks to the librarians at the Saskatoon Public Library for preserving bound volumes of *Chatelaine* and for bringing them up from the deep, dark depths of the library for me. Thank you to my loving family for initiating my interest in baking and supporting me along the way. Thank you to my friends for the many days and nights spent in small kitchens. And, thank you Malcolm for always helping me and believing in me.

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Introduction

*Knead flesh by using both hands, flesh between thumb and index finger, and gently pinch
massage from hips upwards – Eveleen Dollery, “Body Job”*

In her Introduction to *The Canlit Foodbook*, Margaret Atwood writes, “I think I first connected literature with eating when I was twelve and reading *Ivanhoe*: there was Rebecca, shut up romantically in a tower, but what did she have to *eat*?” (1). Atwood proposes that “authors could be divided into two groups: those that mention food, indeed revel in it, and those that never give it a second thought” (1). Atwood’s cultivation of food’s narrative potential is evident in her poetry, fiction, and non-fiction alike. In Atwood’s novels, writes Parker,

[a]ll the heroines interpret the world in terms of food and negotiate their way through life using food. For women, eating and non-eating articulate that which is ideologically unspeakable. Food functions as a muted form of female self-expression but, more than that, it also becomes a medium of experience. Food imagery saturates the novels and becomes the dominant metaphor the heroines use to describe people, landscape, and emotion. (358)

For a woman to eat, as the Greek myth of Persephone and the biblical story of Eve recount, is punishable. But to eat is also to express desire and to gain knowledge and experience. In her first published novel, *The Edible Woman*, written in 1965 and published in 1969, Atwood pays tribute to both the distasteful and the pleasurable qualities of food and eating. The novel’s title speaks to the central theme that Atwood names ““symbolic cannibalism”” (Bouson 15): to eat an edible representation of a human being. The cake-lady that Marian bakes best exemplifies the novel’s investment in this theme. However, the reverse, the motif of women as food, populates the

narrative with images of grotesque and uncanny resemblances between women's bodies and edible matter.

The Edible Woman portrays the identity crisis of a young woman, Marian MacAlpin, a crisis experienced through her physical sense of self in the midst of consumer culture. Atwood illustrates how traditional feminine roles as well as the traditional romance plot limit women's choice, agency, and self-discovery, predicaments woman confronted and questioned in the 1960s. J. Brooks Bouson explains: unlike the traditional courtship novel in which the couple must overcome a series of frustrating obstacles to achieve the endpoint of marriage, *The Edible Woman* is patterned around, not a frustrated progression toward, but a frustrated movement away from romantic affiliation (17). In *The Edible Woman*, "the traditional story of female maturation" offers a dead end rather than a path to fulfillment for the protagonist. Marriage offers not so much a "climactic event" (Boone qtd. in Bouson 17) but rather "the stale doom of stockings in the sink and bacon fat congealed in pans" (Atwood *Edible Woman* 64) or a hallowed personality, signified in the novel by images of cantaloupe rinds, a scare-crow (93), and an apple without its core (276). In *The Second Sex*, Simone de Beauvoir writes that "marriage is the destiny traditionally offered to women by society" (400) for two reasons. Firstly, women "must provide the society with children" (402), and secondly, "marriage is the only means of integration into the community" (402) of production and consumption. A future at Seymour Surveys offers Marian an alternative to marriage that is no more gratifying: "Somewhere in front of me a self was waiting, pre-formed, a self who had worked during innumerable years for Seymour Surveys" (15). Faced with either marriage or a dead-end job at the marketing company, Marian's destiny as a woman offers little room for self-realization but rather a life in service to consumer society. Illustrating Beauvoir's aphorism that a "woman's fate is bound up with that of

perishable things” (567), Atwood uses perishable food in the novel as a metaphor for women’s roles as wives and mothers as well as for their bodies.

In this thesis, I study *The Edible Woman* in conjunction with *Chatelaine* magazines from 1959-1969 (when Doris Anderson was editor), the decade leading up to the novel’s publication date. Both reflective and formative of cultural ideology in the 1960s, *Chatelaine* informs a script of ideas, images, and metaphors with which to understand Marian’s fears of both food and the female body as well as her attempts to consolidate a sense of self that complies with appropriate feminine conduct. *Chatelaine* and *The Edible Woman* share the same national and historical space and both borrow and create symbolic meaning through situated representations of women’s purchase, preparation, presentation, and consumption of food. Whereas the articles in *Chatelaine* are largely prescriptive, “giving definite, precise directions or instruction” (OED), *The Edible Woman* is descriptive, tending towards ambiguity rather than didactic terms for womanly conduct. The advertising content in *Chatelaine*, like the novel, is imaginative and aims to construct an illusion of reality. William Leiss et al. write that “advertising is the product of creative intuition, and influenced by particular historical styles and tastes” (161); literature can be similarly described. Not only does *Chatelaine* illuminate *The Edible Woman* but Atwood’s attention to the grotesque female body and the metaphoric relationship between food and bodies also reveals hidden cultural anxieties in the magazine. Firmly rooted in the reality of its time, Atwood’s fiction addresses women’s roles as wives and mothers, exaggerates fears of the body, and amplifies the metaphor of women as food present in *Chatelaine*.

Critical scholarship on the novel discusses Atwood’s attention to popular culture during the 1960s and the symbolic significance of food and the female body in general; however, critics detail neither the historically and nationally situated concepts of the female body and the

symbolic properties of food nor the metaphoric relation between the two present in the magazine. Several critics refer to the influential work of Simone de Beauvoir and Betty Friedan, both of whom inspired Atwood's politics in the novel. Carol Ann Howells reads the novel within the context of Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*. Howells writes that "*The Edible Woman* belongs to a specific moment in the history of North American postwar feminism, which registered the first signs of the contemporary women's movement in its resistance to social myths of femininity" (20). While recognizing the novel's historical context, Howells still alludes to Atwood's diversions from realism and the novel's "excursions into fantasy and its flights into metaphorical inventiveness" (43). Feminist readings of the novel by J. Brooks Bouson, Maggie Humm, Emma Parker, and Sofia Sanchez-Grant refer to the social context from which the novel arises. For example, Parker writes that "Atwood probes the prohibitions on the public display of female appetite and the social taboos which surround women and food in terms of the politics of eating" (349). Bouson draws attention to the gothic and grotesque elements in the text. "*The Edible Woman*," writes Bouson, "reflects both the cultural identification of women with body and the pervasive fear of the uncontained, uncontrollable female body as it puts the 'mature' female body on display and scrutinizes its isolated parts" (21). Karen Stein and Sharon Wilson highlight the gothic themes of bodily distortion and metamorphosis that the heroine experiences: "the boundaries between human and other animals are ominously permeable to Marian, emphasizing the novel's Gothic motif of transformation and portending loss of control" (46). Not only "the boundaries between human and other animals" but also those between plants, especially fruits and vegetables, appear fragile to Marian. Wilson calls Atwood's technique "mock-gothic" as the "fears of eating, being eaten, suddenly changing into someone else, and being unable to transform at all" (85) disquiet the romance plot. Tracy Brain and Elspeth Cameron both describe

Marian's inability to eat as symptomatic of anorexia nervosa, a disease that was becoming more common and gaining recognition in the 1960s. Several feminist critics share Gayle Greene's observation that "Marian's starvation is both protest against and correlative to her repression of herself to fit a mold of 'femininity' that requires her objectification" (106). Parker concedes that Marian's "non-eating is a physical expression of her powerlessness and, at the same time, a protest against that powerlessness" (350). However, an analysis of the diet content in *Chatelaine* reveals that dietary restrictions were a way to discipline women; ironically, the magazine promoted non-eating as a feminine means of self-discovery rather than a form of silent protest.

Critics have anatomized the meaning of the woman-shaped cake that Marian creates, Peter's rejection of both the cake and in turn Marian, as well as Marian's act of "symbolic cannibalism" (Bouson 15) when she eats her anthropomorphic confection. Howells situates the cake within a feminist politics, describing it as involving both "complicity" with and a "critique" (43) of feminine roles. Baking articles and advertisements in *Chatelaine* concretize Howells' statement and demonstrate how baking and offering a cake is a traditional feminine act yet how the act of baking may offer a creative outlet for women. On the surface, the cake ads in *Chatelaine* demonstrate the satire of Atwood's interpretation of the profoundly feminine gesture of serving a cake to a loved one. Further, Marian's eating of the cake responds to representations of femininity both in literature and in the magazine where women's pleasure in eating is either constricted or ignored.

Chatelaine is a Canadian women's magazine first published in March 1928. Between 1957-1977 when women's rights activist Doris Anderson was editor, *Chatelaine* encouraged women to confront and to solve what Betty Friedan famously called "the problem that has no name": the ennui, isolation, and intellectual and creative emptiness felt by middle-class women.

In *Roughing it in the Suburbs*, Valerie Korinek acknowledges *Chatelaine*'s contribution to second-wave feminism: "In the fifties and sixties, during *Chatelaine*'s heyday, the magazine created a community of readers, writers, and editors who explored the changing nature of women's lives" (366). According to a 1969 study by the Canadian Media Directors Council, 57.3% of *Chatelaine*'s "community of readers" (Korinek 366) were housewives, while students and women in clerical or sales work composed just over 20% of readers (67). Regarding marital status, nearly 70% of readers were married while just over 20% were single (66). The 35-44-year-old group was the largest age demographic, "followed by the 55 and over age category, while the [magazine's] most desired age group, the 25-34 year olds, was in third place" (66). The lower-middle income group, who "enjoyed a fair standard of living, with few luxuries" (68), represented 79.3% of the readership (68). *Chatelaine* stirred women's appetites for self-fulfillment at a time when they were reentering the workplace and redefining femininity, and the magazine was popular because of it. Circulation rates increased from 480,000 when Anderson became editor to 1.8 million by the late 1960s. Anderson was socially forward-thinking but was bound by the limitations of a for-profit publication. While Anderson often tipped her hat to Friedan, she did not adopt her pioneering brand of feminism that outright rejected women's roles as housewives. Rather, Anderson opted for a middle way, championing women's right to be educated professionals while still saluting women's hard work in the home.

It should be noted that although the magazine sought to represent the diversity of women's experiences, the magazine for the most part portrayed the lives of white, lower-middle-class Canadians. As Korinek points out, "the people depicted in advertisements continued to be very homogeneous (96% were white)" (125). In the 1960s, *Chatelaine* did publish articles on black women, interracial relationships, and First Nation's women and their rights, yet the

magazine as a whole remained directed, in both editorial content and advertising, toward the dominant racial demographic. Similar to *Chatelaine's* near-homogeneous depiction of race, “heterosexual, marital sex was the only prevailing image [of sexuality] presented in the ads” (176). Korinek notes that the magazine did portray lesbianism in fiction and editorials such as Renate Wilson’s candid 1966 article “What Turns Women to Lesbianism?” As Korinek’s monograph illustrates, *Chatelaine* was a forum for reporting and discussing controversial topics that affected Canadians across the country.¹

A 1958 study from the Motivational Research Institute in New York City commissioned by the *Chatelaine* advertising department described “the new Canadian woman” as “emerging rapidly into a state of social, economic, and psychological independence as a woman and as a citizen” (qtd. in Korinek 75). The concept of femininity, or what it meant to be a woman, was in crisis in the 1960s and being redefined. In *Purity and Danger*, Mary Douglas writes that “the [human] body is a model which can stand for any bounded system. Its boundaries can represent any (social) boundaries which are threatened or precarious” (142). As women writing in the magazine challenged the boundaries of femininity, a counter movement arose in which the perimeters of femininity were displaced to the body where they could be regulated. A selective reading of the magazine’s food-related content discloses an alarming number of articles and advertisements dedicated to disciplining, rather than liberating, women’s bodies. As Korinek notes, “One major difference [from the fifties] in the sixties was the increased emphasis on dieting” (204). Ironically, feminist ideals of self-discovery often characterize dieting articles and advertisements. Similarly, although baking articles and advertisements encourage creativity and self-expression, such artistic achievements often channel the traditional role of the woman as

¹ For a detailed analysis of race, class, gender, and readership as it pertains to *Chatelaine* in the 1950s and 1960s, see Korinek.

provider of food. Beauvoir recognizes the idealization of housework and motherhood as a common phenomenon: “We have seen what poetic veils are thrown over her monotonous burdens of housekeeping and maternity: in exchange for her liberty she has received the false treasures of her ‘femininity’” (678). Although *Chatelaine* persistently challenged feminine stereotypes of the self-sacrificing wife and mother, its focus on the female body and eating became a manner of tempering women’s agency through an “ethics of control” (Foucault, *Care of the Self* 65) that contradicts the feminist ethics of liberation present elsewhere in the magazine.

Atwood parodies cultural constructions of the body and food, using grotesque images in her novel to uncover the “unpredictable, messy, changeable bodies of real people” (Stein 47). Mikhail Bakhtin writes that the grotesque is “that which protrudes from the body, all that seeks to go out beyond the body’s confines. . . . [It] is a body in the act of becoming” (“The Grotesque Image” 93). Beauvoir explains how the woman’s maturing body becomes grotesque to herself and an object to others:

The young girl feels that her body is getting away from her, it is no longer the straightforward expression of her individuality; it becomes foreign to her; and at the same time she becomes for others a thing: on the street men follow her with their eyes and comment on her anatomy. She would like to be invisible; it frightens her to become flesh and to show her flesh. (288)

Likewise, throughout much of the story, Marian fears her imminent social and physical maturation and visibility. As Linda Hutcheon points out, images of “drowning, dissolving, drifting” (18) represent “the loss of a firm sense of identity by merging with the human or natural environment [that] is a threat to Marian” (18). An additional image, which is the focus of my analysis, is spreading out. The division of the novel into three parts according to Marian’s voice

mimics her desire for self-containment. Her perspective shapes the narrative; therefore, the grotesque characterizations that Atwood uses within the genre of realism reflect Marian's progressively distorted interpretation both of herself and her material environment. As Atwood says, "characters are creating the world which they inhabit, and I think we all do that to a certain extent, or we certainly do a lot of rearranging" (qtd. in Hutcheon 27-28). As it does for dieters, food becomes the central source of anxiety and intense preoccupation for Marian. In the novel, food emerges from its role as a quotidian prop to become an animated character, often an antagonist, through which Marian expresses her fear and her dissent. However, in the novel's hyperbolic moments, the frightening scenes adopt a humorous quality and are funny precisely because they are humorous in the sense of "pertaining to the bodily humours," their "disordered state" (OED), and the difficult task of controlling them.

In Chapter One, I focus on content in *Chatelaine* related to dieting and the female body, including articles on weight loss, advertisements for dieting products and girdles, and beauty and fashion articles. Primarily a homemaker's magazine, the pages of *Chatelaine* are well-stocked with consumer advice, recipes, and food features and advertisements. During the 1960s, numerous convenience foods entered the marketplace, and post-war prosperity led to larger and richer diets among middle-class Canadians. Synchronous with the abundance of food products, and perhaps as a consequence, concerns over the general population's increase in weight became a concern. In *Unbearable Weight*, Susan Bordo writes that towards the end of the 19th century, "Excess body weight came to be seen as reflecting moral or personal inadequacy, or lack of will. These associations are possible only in a culture of overabundance – that is, in a society in which those who control the production of 'culture' have more than enough to eat" (192). In the pages of *Chatelaine*, medical and dietary authorities targeted women who did not fall within

constructed standards of a normal body weight and condemned those who exceeded this ideal. As such, women's bodies became a site upon which to pass judgment, and food was to blame for women's physical transgressions. In the 1960s, the magazine printed advertisements for and articles on extreme diet plans, diet products, and undergarments designed to modify and ultimately reduce the female figure. The diets in the magazine promised women a new, transformed self through denying the body and its natural processes of transformation and growth.

In Chapter Two, I focus on articles and advertisements related to the preparation and presentation of food, in particular cake, as a symbol of femininity. Courtship rituals between a man and a woman are enacted in advertisements for food products and inform my reading of the final scenes in *The Edible Woman* as a parody of this stereotypical dynamic. Commonly, the baking advertisements in the magazine promote the same kind of feminine self-restraint as the dieting content: a woman must prepare and serve food yet not taste too much of it herself. At odds with the imperative to reduce the appetite and the figure, the magazine often promoted the notion that women were by nature caregivers and homemakers, duties that include shopping and food preparation. As Deborah Lupton writes in *Food, the Body, and the Self*, "women must provide plentiful food that their families enjoy, but they are also expected to ascribe to the notion of the sexually attractive body as slim" (142). Within the pages of *Chatelaine* lie these seemingly incompatible feminine roles, which rely on the myth of sacrificial femininity in order to remove inherent contradictions. Roland Barthes writes that "myth does not deny things, on the contrary, its function is to talk about them; simply, it purifies them, it makes them innocent, it gives them a natural and eternal justification, it gives them a clarity which is not that of an explanation but that of a statement of fact" (143). Through the construction of the myth of woman as the self-

sacrificing wife and mother, the paradoxical ideal of the woman who feeds others yet refrains from feeding herself are united and naturalized in the magazine. In the final section of this chapter, I draw attention to the scant number of articles that celebrate the pleasures of eating, in particular foods high in fat and sugar, deemed sinful by doctors and dieticians. The possibility for women to enjoy baking, to consume pleasurably, and to critique food informs my reading of the final scenes in the novel.

The Edible Woman is the focus of Chapter Three, Part One. I discuss how the novel draws attention to and is informed by the symbolic meaning of food and the female body. Using Bakhtin's conception of the grotesque, Julia Kristeva's discussion of abjection, and Michel Foucault's concept of the fortified self, I interpret Marian's fear of both food and the mature figure as a reaction to the impending transformation of her body that her destiny as either a married woman or an employee at Seymour Surveys entails. The switch from first- to third-person narration reflects Marian's loss of authority as well as her self-objectification. Marian's pathological relationship to food and to her physical self is symptomatic of larger cultural anxieties regarding female growth. The representation of human bodies as edible and the anthropomorphic characteristics of food in the novel reflect language and images that circulate in the cultural consciousness and are also found in *Chatelaine*. Atwood mocks gluttony, caricatures femininity, and intensifies the metaphoric relationship between female bodies and food, yet she shows female self-starvation to be an equally undesirable option.

Chapter Three, Part Two focuses on the final scenes of the novel. Atwood daringly imagines the renewal of Marian's appetite to cook, to create, and to consume. As Marian tells Duncan, "we all have to eat" (58). First, Marian's decision to bake a cake and serve it to her fiancé both mirrors and distorts the familiar image and dynamic of the happy housewife serving

her husband in 1960s advertisements for baking products. Second, Marian's attention to her craft and the pleasure she experiences in baking reflect the rare, yet present, attitudes in the culture also found in articles and advertisements in the magazine devoted to the art and sensual pleasures of cooking. When Marian eats and enjoys the cake, she reverses not only her rejection of food but also the larger cultural and literary constructions of femininity that Atwood draws upon. Consequently, the novel returns to first-person narration as Marian regains an embodied sense of self. Atwood's satirical interpretation of women's situation with regard to food and consumption is acknowledged in this thesis not in an effort to downplay the severity of Marian's problems in relation to food and femininity but to recognize the novel's witty response to consumer culture. Atwood expresses Marian's subjective psychological and physical experiences with candor, even while she ridicules the artificial and saccharine flavor of modern femininity present in 1960s culture.

Chapter One

“Conquer ‘creeping poundage’”: Dieting and Self-Fashioning in *Chatelaine* 1959-1969

When asked about feminist themes in *The Edible Woman*, Atwood responds, “I don’t consider it feminism; I just consider it social realism. That part of it is simply social reporting. It was written in 1965 and that’s what things were like in 1965” (*Conversations* 27). However, W. J. Keith writes that Atwood’s portrayal of Toronto in the 1960s “is not ‘realistic’ in a photographic, documentary sense; she selects certain aspects of the life she knew, exaggerates some, plays down others, and ends with a novel that offers, through comedy and satire, a disturbing view of the ways by which a particular society *moulds* the lives, attitudes, and options of the people who live within it” (15; emphasis added). In the novel, the act of molding stands as a metaphor for women’s situations and their bodies. Marian describes her future at Seymour Surveys as presenting her with a “pre-formed” self, and the feminine cake as “pliable, easy to mold” (317). Women’s malleability is an important theme in the novel. One way to mould lives is to mould bodies, and this is particularly true of women. My first chapter profiles society’s molding of women’s bodies and appetites as evidenced in *Chatelaine* editorials, articles, and advertisements from 1959-1969, the decade leading up to the novel’s publication.

Today, *Chatelaine* is not a progressive feminist magazine; however between 1957-1977 when women’s rights activist Doris Anderson was editor, *Chatelaine* published subversive content, such as interviews with feminists Simone de Beauvoir and Betty Friedan, and articles on birth control, abortion, working women, and female sexuality. Korinek acknowledges *Chatelaine*’s feminist content: “Where there has been a tendency to see *Chatelaine* as part of the structure from which Canadian women distilled gender prescriptions for their lives, the popularity of the magazine was often due, in contrast, to the oppositional or subversive material

it published” (20). Yet it was during Anderson’s editorial tenure that the magazine “ushered in a fixation with body image, weight, and fad diets” (Korinek 147). Whereas the feminist content in *Chatelaine* reported and aided women’s struggle to forge autonomous identities, the magazine’s diet content sought to control their appetites. Bordo explains the coexistence of increased attention to women’s appetites and figures and the rise of the women’s movement: “Anxiety over women’s uncontrollable hungers appears to peak . . . during periods when women are becoming independent and are asserting themselves politically and socially” (161). In this chapter, I examine the concern for women’s eating habits evident in articles and editorials that diagnose “fatness” (McHenry 44) as a modern disease of indulgence, describe extreme methods of dietary regulation, and stress the social rewards of a properly fashioned body. Second, I turn to advertising that promotes the regulation of appetite and the contrived ideal of physical slimness as desirable. Third, I examine beauty and fashion editorials and lingerie ads that, similar to diet plans and advertisements, awaken women’s trepidation over their excess weight; such ads offer commodities like girdles as, writes Kim Chernin in *The Obsession*, a “promise of redemption from the disaster of having been made a woman” (91). Middle-class Canadian women were pressured to fashion themselves in the image of the ideal, slim woman. I define self-fashioning as the act of deliberately molding one’s body and thus identity in the image of socially defined norms. I conclude that such discourse on dieting responded to the modern woman’s paradoxical position within society: she was encouraged to discover a new and liberated self yet submitted to disciplinary practices, such as calorie counting, to fashion herself in the image of an ideal of physical slenderness.

Doctors, dieticians, and journalists who contributed to *Chatelaine* in the 1960s diagnosed and sought to cure what they believed was Canadian women’s era-defining ailment: what they

called “fatness.” In a May 1960 article, prominent doctor and frequent contributor to *Chatelaine*, Dr. Marion Hilliard, alludes to the modern sins of sloth and gluttony: “The total amount of food taken in day by day should be in proportion to the amount of physical work we do. Because we live in a society of abundance and many of us lead comparatively sedentary lives, this calls for restraint in eating for most [Canadians]” (20). In “Canadian Women are Too Fat,” Dr. E.W. McHenry echoes Dr. Hilliard’s condemnation but directs it specifically at women with both an accusation of obesity and an opportunity for salvation: “One in every four [women] has a greater weight problem than her husband and is fatter than her grandmother was at the same age. Here’s what you can do about it” (25). He blames laziness and food binges and offers exercise and an 800 to 1,200-calorie per day diet as a cure, far below the recommended amount “essential for basal metabolism” (Milne 80). McHenry regards women as particularly culpable: “The average weight of men increased 4.5 percent; the increase in the average weight of women was 9.8 percent. Too many Canadian women have become too fat” (25, 44). He dismisses both thyroid imbalances and psychological conditions as a cause, blaming laziness and overindulgence. In the 1960s, accusations were directed toward both the nation as a whole – “as a nation, we do not live on the verge of starvation; food surpluses are our problem” (Dollery, “MM Diet” 27) – and the individual who is guilty of feeble self-discipline, “fatness [being] evidence of self-indulgence” (McHenry 44). As the nation’s abundance could not be controlled, due to the nature of capitalism, the individual woman was advised to resist temptation in a society of plenty.

In a society where “fatness is evidence of self-indulgence” (McHenry 44), a woman’s character manifests in her physical appearance; her body communicates either her virtue or her vice. In Dr. McHenry’s article, the reader was offered two objective methods of self-appraisal: a pinch test on the upper arm and a weight to height ratio chart. However, Dr. McHenry believed

that the best way for women to decide whether or not they were too fat was to involve them in subjective self-analysis. He writes, “A simpler method is to take off your clothes and look at yourself in the mirror. If you can stand the sight, you are either slim or careless. If you can’t stand the view, see your doctor and get his advice about reducing” (48). McHenry overlooks the mirror’s potential to reflect a distorted figure. He forgets that the mirror reflects not an objective truth but rather an image created in the mind of the beholder. However, the mirror becomes an important tool for self-assessment, through which the viewer may pass judgment on her body. In *Food, the Body, and the Self*, Deborah Lupton explains that women’s bodies and appetites are charged with a moral current: bodies are “potent symbols of the extent to which their ‘owners’ possess self-control” (16). In a 1961 *Chatelaine* article, “Who Says Anyone Can Lose Weight,” Ethel Gillingham expresses her frustration with modern interpretations of fatness:

Criminals, delinquents, alcoholics and skid-row tramps are acknowledged to be suffering from an illness, rather than wickedness. They are listened to with sympathy and reasonable understanding. But to us the experts will turn a deaf derisive ear. If that best dress takes to straining its seams, and that favorite skirt won’t fasten, it is because of a marshmallow spine and weak gluttonous habits. (38)

Contrary to the trim figure that embodies the Protestant work ethic, the fat body evinces a “careless” (McHenry 48) disposition. The metaphor of women’s anatomy as “marshmallow” compares women’s bodies and glutinous food.

In the magazine, food, both cause and cure of fatness, acquires symbolic significance. As Lupton explains, “‘Good’ food is often described as nourishing and ‘good for you,’ but it is also indicative of self-control and concern for one’s health, while ‘bad’ food is bad for one’s health

and on a deeper level of meaning is a sign of moral weakness” (27). Often in diet articles and editorials, high-calorie and high-fat foods possess negative significance, whereas low-calorie and low-fat foods are presented as virtuous. Both are invested with the ability to transform the consumer’s identity. As Kilgour explains, to eat something, as Eve ate the forbidden fruit to gain knowledge, is to acquire its power, whether beneficial or detrimental.

One food in particular that carried negative significance in *Chatelaine* was dessert, cake, which bears significance in *The Edible Woman*. The fear of this food results from its high carbohydrate, calorie, and fat content. Once eaten, dessert disturbs a woman’s figure: “Excess of carbohydrate is converted into fat for storage” (McHenry 47). In a beauty article “Knee Knack,” dessert is a metaphor for a woman’s unshapely knees: “Now that short skirts are for everybody the dread beauty problem of the year is dumpling knees – that puffiness that appears from nowhere when thighs get heavy” (Dollery 34). The adage “you are what you eat” assumes its literal form: if a woman eats dumplings, she becomes them. In “3 Dazzling Diet Successes,” Irma McNulty admits that during her diet she denied herself sweet foods: “For dessert she ate lettuce, celery, and carrots” (Dollery 45). Marian follows similar leporine eating habits: “She felt like a rabbit, crunching all the time on mounds of leafy greenery” (203). In “Eat and Stay Slim,” Elaine Collett, Director of the *Chatelaine* Institute, attempts to harmonize pleasure and abnegation. “Not everything good to eat is fattening,” she writes and offers “delicious low-calorie ‘extras’” (45) as substitutes for the dieter. The recipes in the article call for non-caloric sweeteners and a list of foods to avoid includes chocolate layer cake, Devil’s Food Cake, which should be replaced by the aptly named and less fattening Angel Food Cake, a title that expresses the dessert’s virtuous qualities. An article on dieting clubs features a profile of Weight Watchers in its infancy. The club advocates a 1,200-calorie per day diet that prohibits sweeteners, soft

drinks, and cake, “a forbidden food” (Austen 65). Similar to the fruit in the Garden of Eden, cake is forbidden. The magazine sells the idea that eating fattening desserts can lead to personal shame, public condemnation, or whispers among the girls. Conversely, resistance to temptation generates individual pride and social acceptance.

Both the social scorn of failing to mirror the modern ideal of slimness and the rewards of dieting were frequently depicted in *Chatelaine*. Korinek writes, “most diet advertisements used the dual prongs of wish fulfilment and scare tactics, offering readers images of the thin ‘good life’ or frightening phrases to propel the complacently overweight into a weight-loss regime” (148). The dieting articles and editorials employ similar strategies. The alienating personal and social repercussions the imperfect figure symbolizes were often stated directly in the magazine. In “What’s New in Dieting,” Jean Yack states, “In our vigor-conscious, beauty-conscious North American world no one loves a fat man, or woman or child” (39). Gillingham attests to her marginality and the social scorn she suffers as a result of her large body: “In this day of conformity, the woman who does not cast a slim shadow belongs to a minority group sadly in need of defense . . . We are continually harassed with criticism and condemnation for our weakness. Are we the last remnant of sin?” (38). Gillingham writes in a spirit of critique towards body norms, yet her article features her struggles to conform to such ideals, as I discuss below. In the feature, “Why We Split Up,” Dawn MacDonald interviews couples to determine why they divorced. Ruth and Hank Stanley explain that their marriage collapsed as a consequence of Ruth’s weight gain. Hank confesses, “Ruth got fat. There were other things, but I think the marriage would have worked if it hadn’t been for that” (25). Ruth admits that she gained 200 pounds: “I suppose that sent Hank to the other women all the faster . . . You see I was just keeping so much walled up inside and when I’m upset, I eat” (45). Ruth justifies her

husband's physical transgressions as a natural consequence of her own. Offering redemption from public and personal condemnation, diet articles promote the regulation of appetite not only as a means of avoiding the social scorn consequent of an unconventional figure but also as the primary determinant of a woman's self-discovery and social success.

In *Chatelaine* in the 1960s, dieting was rarely promoted as a way to improve health or to increase longevity – notably, many of the diets and diet success stories in the magazine were fashion editorials – but rather as a process of self-articulation through self-regulation. In *The Care of the Self*, Foucault provides a useful model for understanding how practices that urge self-restraint in a world of temptation promise a fortified sense of self. He identifies a comparable imperative that guided the practices of ancient Greeks. Speaking of the rise of medical thought and practice, Foucault writes that “the increased medical involvement in the cultivation of the self appears to have been expressed through a particular and intense form of attention to the body” (56). As a result, individuals pursued self-reliance and strength through bodily means. Foucault observes that to “subject oneself to self-examination” (62) and to deny physical pleasures, such as eating rich foods, was to have the goal of “escaping all the dependences and enslavements” so that “one ultimately rejoins oneself, like a harbor sheltered from the tempests or a citadel protected by its ramparts” (65). Ultimately, the care of the self requires both mental and physical resistance to various forms of temptation within one's environment, where excessive indulgence endangers the individual.

In *Powers of Horror*, Julia Kristeva's concept of abjection reflects a similar sense of identity formation “based on exclusion” (6). Echoing Foucault, she describes the “clean and proper self” (8) as a ““fortified castle”” (47) that barricades itself from the abject, such as hated or feared food. “Food loathing,” Kristeva writes, “is perhaps the most elementary and most

archaic form of abjection” (2). In *The Hungry Self*, Kim Chernin explains that food is central to an individual’s identity formation: “Since childhood, food has been the most evident symbol available for expressing [a woman’s] struggles and failures and triumphs with an emerging sense of self” (104). By refusing or demanding certain food or drink, the child first develops and expresses individual taste, forming an autonomous identity. Lupton writes that food continues to be a medium of self-expression later in life: “Anorexia may be viewed as a form of a quest for the ideal of the authentic self, a need to pare away the superfluous flesh to uncover the self” (135). Dieting proponents often claimed that a woman could uncover her true self and enter into civilized society through self-denial and weight loss.

Numerous diet success stories in the magazine documented women’s new-found beauty and social inauguration as a result of weight loss. A diet could “help each one discover her own amazing new loveliness” (Dollery, “3 Dazzling Successes” 41). One of several diet success stories in *Chatelaine*, a 1959 feature “Diet Duet” recounts the story of two women who lost 30 pounds in two weeks by adhering to *Chatelaine*’s Do-It-Yourself Diet. The two women continued to eat the foods they enjoyed but reduced portions and counted calories. The women attest to their self-denial and their management of lapses in their regimen: “They coped with evenings out and holiday parties by eating less during the day or on the day after” (Dollery 78). They both admit that their physical sacrifices were worth the emotional and social rewards: “‘It is so enjoyable to be slim,’” says Lynda Gagliardini, “and the compliments!” (78). Another diet success story, “Diet to Beauty: A 212 Pound Girl becomes a 100 Pound Bride,” narrates the physical and social transformation of Barbara, who perceived her overweight body as unnatural: “I decided I must diet and try to look like a human being” (Dollery 57). Barbara’s comment expresses her alienation from her former larger body; its monstrous form excluded her from

humanity. To become “a human being” again, Barbara cut down to 800 calories per day, describing her limited food intake as “agonizingly difficult” (57). Consequently, she lost 112 pounds, married, and discovered her “new-found beauty” (57). As the title suggests, her passage into womanhood and marriage accompanied her weight loss. In another “Diet to Beauty” feature, Margaret, who went from 196 to 134 pounds, says, “When I think of how fat I once was, I shudder. . . . As I slimmed, I began to feel a completely new person” (Dollery 42). Dieting offers redemption to a woman who feels locked in an unnatural body. An article that exposes the high rate of failure for dieters, “Why Diets Fail” ends optimistically with an allusion to the youthful self potentially hidden within the imperfect body: “perhaps, someday, the thin girl who is said to live inside every fat woman will finally be released” (Kieran 20). These articles speak of the dieter as coming into a new, and more civilized, self via exclusion and abjection of the former self.

Complementary to the articles that promoted weight loss, *Chatelaine* published recipes conducive to dieting. Throughout the 1960s, editorials and articles in *Chatelaine* offered low-calorie recipes and diet specials in some of their regular recipe features. In 1961 Eloise Popiel writes to Doris Anderson: “I skim through your pages and read the mouth-watering recipes, all nutritious, all delicious – and just plain fattening. I would dearly love to see a portion (it could be a small portion) dedicated to low-calorie recipes” (156). Women wanted to transform themselves into good citizens and good women by losing weight.

Catering to the modern woman’s dilemma of having to cook a satisfying meal for her family and watch her weight, Elaine Collett published low-fat and low-calorie recipes that list calorie counts in “You’ll Never Know You’re Dieting.” She recognized that Canadians’ attitudes towards food had shifted due to heightened awareness of calorie and fat consumption. “In many

families,” she writes, “eating is no longer a pleasure but a problem” (41). Collett’s statement about the shift in the nation’s sentiments regarding food indicates how eating induces guilt rather than pleasure or gratitude. Collett offered a compromise to her readers, acknowledging that they may have to adjust their cooking and dietary habits, but nevertheless “the family can eat happily together – the weight watchers without feeling noble or the non-weight watchers martyred” (41). Collett’s 1964 food feature flaunts the recipes’ sensory appeal despite their caloric economy. “Low Cost Low Calorie and Delicious” features “dishes that are kind to your figure, your palate, and your purse . . . without turning your family into mealtime martyrs” (36). Ironically, however, it was the woman who was martyred rather than her family. Bordo identifies the ideological foundation that underlies the image of the sacrificial mother. She writes that the “[d]enial of self and the feeding of others are hopelessly enmeshed in this construction of ideal mother” (118), an ideal that authors such as Collett desire to uphold.

Gillingham’s written and photographic documentation in “Who Says Anyone Can Lose Weight” evinces her martyrdom. At her doctor’s recommendations, she limits herself to 1,200 calories per day. In a photograph taken in her home, she stares despondently at a boiled egg. The text explains, “Fourth week: 151 pounds. Well, they’re nourishing – that is about all you can say. The fun of eating is just a memory” (39). Gillingham grants her children the task of policing her actions and fining her if they catch her snacking. A disturbing photograph captures Gillingham, the sacrificial wife and mother, baking in her kitchen and pouring food from a bowl into a pan, a gag over her mouth: “Fifth week: 151 pounds. At doctor’s suggestion, I wear mask while cooking to stop nibbling. Still on 1,200 calories” (39). Bordo explains that a “practical ‘discipline’” (130), here the gag, “trains female bodies in the knowledge of their limits and possibilities. Denying oneself food becomes the central micro-practice in the education of

feminine self-restraint and containment of impulse” (130). Wearing the gag is a micro-practice, an individual discipline, that not only controls Mrs. Gillingham’s impulses to eat but also silences her. During the 1960s, *Chatelaine* promoted restrictive micro-practices that encouraged severe self-discipline rather than modest adjustments to cooking.

One of the magazine’s most drastic diets was the MM Diet, an acronym for Menus and Manoeuvres, detailed by Eveleen Dollery in “*Chatelaine*’s Menus Manoeuvres Diet.” The word “manoeuvre,” which has military connotations, is “a carefully planned scheme or action, especially one involving deception” (OED). The diet, which ran in 1962, encouraged a woman to transform her relationship not only with food but also with her own body, directing her to engage in disciplinary tactics such as physical restraint. The two-step plan was designed so that a woman would lose ten pounds in ten days, and after ten days she returned either to a 1,200 or a 1,800-calorie per day diet. For the first ten days, the dieter follows a specific menu that limits her calorie intake to below 800 per day. The purpose of the ten-day diet is not only to reduce but also to give the dieter “a psychological lift, to prove with a swift convincing loss that dieting does work” (26). After ten days, the dieter adopts “Manoeuvres” to help her adhere to a lasting weight maintenance program. The first “Manoeuvre” engages the dieter’s imagination as a means of bodily mastery: “Begin by thinking thin: brainwash yourself. You want to lose. Remind yourself that overweight is unappealing, unattractive, sometimes grossly ugly. . . . It leaves you with a nagging little inferiority complex” (27). The dieter is encouraged to internalize the cultural stigma she would suffer as a consequence of returning to her former weight. Dollery lists a total of 38 tactics or micro-practices, which include emulation (“3. Paste clippings of slim pretty figures on your refrigerator door”); bodily restraint (“6. Dining out, wear a tight girdle or belt as a reminder not to splurge”); avoidance of pleasurable foods (“21. Don’t buy or make candies,

pies or cakes”); delusions (“34. Think thin at mealtimes. Imagine you are a sylphlike beauty who only picks at her food, preferring tender gourmet morsels to gourmand mass”) (27); and strict eating prohibitions (“36. Once you’ve lost weight, keep it off with these manoeuvres: never eat second helpings; eat one chop, never two; one egg, never two. . . . Never finish a steak, dressing, potato, rice (even if you leave only a mouthful, it’s good practice in self-denial”). Beauvoir writes that “masochism exists when the individual chooses to be made purely a thing under the conscious will of others, to see herself as a thing, to play at being a thing” (375) such as a “sylphlike beauty” (Dollery 27). Here, the will of others becomes the will of the self. The manoeuvres train the dieter to view her appetite as a frightening force that she must monitor and control. Facing images of “slim pretty figures” (27) as though peering into a distorting yet alluring mirror, the dieter is encouraged to imagine a grotesque “double,” an “estranged self” (Beauvoir 375) that she must consume in order to become the ideal self, the “slim pretty figure on [the] refrigerator door” (Dollery 27).

A 1966 diet feature in *Chatelaine* also holds the promise of a new self at the expense of the old. “A New Way to Lose Weight: LP [Liquid Protein] Diet” by Barbara Croft opens, “If dieting’s here to stay – and in our affluent North American society it begins to look that way – the best diet is one that’s nutritionally sound, shows results fast enough to be encouraging, and teaches us the kind of food we should eat for the rest of our lives if we want to stay slim” (17). Similar to the MM Diet, the LP Diet begins with “substantial weight loss” (17) in the first two phases, and the third phase is designed to maintain the dieter’s new weight. Whereas the MM Diet proposes an initial ten-day diet that allows between 700 and 800 calories a day, Phase 1 of the LP Diet restricts calorie intake to a mere 300 to 400 calories per day acquired from an infantile diet of liquids only, such as milk, tomato juice, and consommé. The second phase offers

two programs, the One-Meal and the Three-Meal. The total calorie count is 800 to 900 calories per day. The third phase begins when the dieter reaches her desired weight. She eats the same foods but increases the serving size only enough “to maintain [her] attractive new figure” (19). Despite the monotony of the insipid menus, such as one boiled egg and one tomato for breakfast, and the commitment required to follow the three-phase program, the LP Diet was popular with readers. Mrs. Richard Wells expresses her gratitude in a letter to Doris Anderson: “Thank you for your Liquid Program Diet [Feb.]. In six days I had a weight loss of 8 ½ pounds!” (106). Another reader writes that she lost ten pounds in two weeks (106). Due to the LP Diet’s popularity, the magazine provided reprints of the diet (Editors 80). However, an admonitory letter from nutritionists and dieticians alleges that the diet is “inadvisable” (Milne 80). They warn that long-term deprivation causes iron and vitamin deficiencies and that the number of calories the suggested menus provide is lower than the article states. They confirm that “1,400 to 1,700 calories are essential for basal metabolism for the average person, it is obvious that this need is not being met by the LP Diet” (80). Despite warnings, readers continued to follow the LP Diet. Shortly after this letter is published, a “Happy Dieter” writes to *Chatelaine* of her success. She lost 34 pounds in six months and affirms, “I am on Phase 3 for life” (Middleton 152).

Appealing to a woman’s intellect with scientific formulas for weight reduction and to her emotions with both threats and promised rewards, diet features provide the illusion that self-restraint ultimately yields self-realization. Yet, disciplining the body’s appetite generates neither transcendence nor an independent identity. As Beauvoir writes of the dieter, “she declines to get fat; in physical culture she finds self-affirmation as subject and in a measure frees herself from her contingent flesh, but this liberation easily falls back into dependence” (504). Similarly, Chernin explains in *The Hungry Self* that the dieter’s quest for identity becomes submerged

beneath an obsession with food (22). Both the MM and the LP Diets require the dieter to monitor and to record each bite. The dieter is encouraged to free herself from cravings, but she must still attend to them to survive.

Aware of the dieter's specific needs, food manufacturers in the 1960s tailored products to suit weight-conscious consumers. Advertisements for products that sought to aid or to cure weight problems appeared with increasing frequency in *Chatelaine* in the 1960s. Advertisements targeted caloric disequilibrium as the cause of excess weight. A 1959 ad for Metropolitan Life Insurance admonishes readers to "face the fact that overweight – in more than 95 percent of the cases – is caused by eating and drinking too much" (3). A 1960 ad for Libby's Calorie Master targeted calorie intake as the chief cause of and potential cure for excess weight. The Calorie Master is a handheld circular guide that "lists popular foods on one side, caloric values (approx.) on the other" (17). The text assures its product is "such an easy way to conquer 'creeping poundage' where it starts – at the meal-planning stage" (17). The phrase "creeping poundage" instills a gothic sensibility in the fear of weight gain. The language describes a woman's own body as a sinister force that threatens her sense of self.

As early as 1959, advertisements for conventional foods exploit products' low-caloric value as a selling point, signaling a cultural preoccupation with dieting. In an ad for Libby's Tomato Juice, beneath a drawing of a smiling, plump, anthropomorphized tomato, a slim woman stands alongside text that reads, "Special for weight-watchers: If you'd like to be nibbling, try Libbying instead. Drink a glass of Libby's tomato juice – Only 4 calories per ounce" (81). The ad appeals to the consumer's desire to be slim yet also to her urge to eat ripe fruit, illustrating the paradox, both in advertising and articles, that eating produces slimness. A 1959 ad for Pepsi, featuring a young confident couple poolside, does not overtly promote Pepsi's appeal to dieters,

but the tagline hints at the drink's levity: "Refresh without filling" (16). Unlike the Libby's ad, which operates symbolically – the tomato represents happiness and the slim woman embodies a feminine ideal – the Pepsi ad situates the product within a familiar and desirable narrative, which Leiss et al. call the lifestyle ad. "In the lifestyle ad," they write, "the dimension of consumption that provides the unifying framework of interpretation is action or behavior appropriate to (or typical of) a social group or situation, rather than use, satisfaction, or utility" (194). By creating a fiction that mirrors possible realities, Pepsi does not market the product for its function but rather for its ability to initiate the consumer into an attractive social setting where consumption conveys character and where the border between fiction and reality blurs.

A transition in the market of edible products that were not manufactured specifically for dieters to those that were is evident in the magazine's advertising. In 1968, prophesying the near future in Canadian supermarkets, Collett's article "A Taste of the Future" forecasts the following: "dietetic foods, both low-fat and low-carbohydrate, are in great demand. There are displays of de-fatted meats, low-fat cheese spreads; 'milk,' with whole-milk flavor, made of polyunsaturated vegetable oil – no butterfat; low-cal no bake cakes, breads, and pastries made of seaweed extracts" (46). The new products that Collett describes are artificial. Unwanted elements of food, such as fat, have been abjected. By 1968, some of Collett's predictions were a reality as confirmed in advertisements for low-fat and low-calorie products. An advertisement for the Coca-Cola product Tab, a soft drink engineered to have fewer calories than its predecessor, addresses a skeptical consumer, "How can just 1 calorie taste so good?" and replies, "Coca-Cola Ltd. took the calories out of Tab but not the flavor" (110). Exceeding Libby's claim to low-calorie content in its tomato juice, Coca-Cola boasts that Tab "has just one calorie in every six ounces" (110). Milk, the primal meal symbolic of motherhood, was also moderated to suit

dieters. A 1959 black and white advertisement for Instant Mil-ko reproduces the mother's role as provider of milk to her child, here a young boy. The simulated milk comes not from her breast, nor from a cow, but rather from a package of powder, whose origins are unknown. Similar to Tab's claim that a reduction of calories does not compromise taste, the Instant Mil-ko ad promises, "You lose the fat but not the flavour when you use Mil-ko . . . Only Mil-ko's exclusive evaporation process produces an instant powdered milk with only fat and water removed . . . not flavour" (36). While the image implies that the mother provides wholesome food for her child, the text claims that Mil-ko benefits her figure: "So now you can solve 'fat problems'" (36). The quotation marks indicate ironic distance, suggesting that the producers of Mil-ko situate themselves outside practices that create or people who experience "'fat problems'" (36). Aylmer, a canned food brand often advertised in *Chatelaine*, ran an ad in 1960 for Special Diet Peaches that promises "[s]weet eating for weight watchers" (90). Unlike Libby's tomato juice, the peaches are "specially prepared without added sugar" (90) for those who are "calorie conscious" (90). The advertisement features a woman wearing a long white dress that accentuates her slim figure, yet the ad displays two thirds of her body only. The rest of her figure is severed longitudinally to create the illusion of slenderness. She exists as a reduced object for the gaze, not as a full body for itself.

Food advertisements that feature women's bodies often depict women who are objectified and self-objectifying. A January 1959 ad for D-Zerta, an artificially sweetened version of Jell-O, shows a woman looking down at her waist, encircled with a tape measure. The text compares D-Zerta to a woman's figure, characterizing both as packaged and consumable objects: "Get D-Zerta today in the slim, trim package" (30). A February 1959 D-Zerta ad features a woman looking in a mirror, where only the reflection of her face is visible and

expresses self-admiration and satisfaction. Leiss et al. explain that between 1945-1965, advertising operated within the cultural frame of narcissism: “Having been admitted to the innermost recesses of the psyche, the product reciprocated by placing its powers at the individual’s disposal” (211). The ad depicts the woman’s private and personal reflections, hoping to capture those of the consumer, and once it has done so, offers the “slim, trim” D-Zerta (30) product as the means of achieving contentment. A Ry-King ad that reads “Keep Slim” pictures a woman who displays her slim body yet casts her gaze towards the ground, exemplifying her passivity and possibly her shame. A Heinz Vinegar ad features a salad in the foreground and two panels of a slim woman in a jumpsuit in the background. Her body is dynamic; her face reserved and static. She epitomizes the physical grace yet also the mental detachment from bodily pleasure dieters crave. An ad for Resiscal, an aid for appetite control, captures the objectifying male gaze. A man watches a woman’s body while she turns to face the camera, participating in a “scopophilic” (Mulvey) fiction where she “*makes herself object*” (Beauvoir 579). A provocative and overtly violent ad for the Slim-Mint Reducing Plan features a slim woman in a bikini with a raised whip in her hand, standing on a tiger rug, colonial imagery that evokes taming the uncivilized other. The text reads, “Weight Tamer.” The image suggests that her weight is extraneous to her slim self. It is fierce and inhuman yet can be controlled. Below the image, the text, “Thousands of svelte, attractive gals help keep their shape slim ’n trim with the Slim-Mint Plan . . . a modern way to help you take weight off” (70), encourages the consumer to domesticate her threatening body and strive for a modern, civilized physique.

Metrecal, a dietary powder described by Betty Friedan in *The Feminine Mystique* as “chalk” (17), was introduced in the magazine in the 1960s. An early ad for Metrecal in 1960 explains the etymology of the word Metrecal as a conflation of the Latin words for “measured”

and “calories” (15). Following a common model for diet product ads, Metrecal mimics a magazine article. The headline “If You Need to Lose Weight Read this Factual Report on the Metrecal Plan” hovers above a looming weigh-scale. The pseudo-article states that Metrecal should be taken four times a day dissolved in water, providing 900 calories per day, 500 calories below the minimum amount required for “basal metabolism” (Milne 80). Unashamed of its function as a form of nutrition that would eventually deprive rather than nourish the consumer, Metrecal claims that its diet plan “helps you take off weight because it gives you a lower caloric intake than is necessary to maintain weight” (15). As a result, “excess weight disappears rapidly and readily” (15). Similar to *Chatelaine’s* LP Diet, Metrecal’s presence indicates that women denied themselves the pleasures associated with eating – texture, variety in taste, and mastication – in order to achieve a physical ideal.

Sucaryl, a calorie-free artificial sweetener, was one of the most frequently advertised diet food products in the magazine in the 1960s. A 1966 ad pictures two mixing bowls; white sugar pours into the first and liquid Sucaryl into the second: “Sweeten with Sucaryl for low-calorie diets. One cup sugar 873 calories. 2 tablespoons liquid Sucaryl same sweetness 0 calories” (12). The ad urges weight-conscious women to reconsider traditional baking practices in order to acquire a modern figure. A 1967 ad depicts two blonde-haired, white faces, the first frowning and the one below smiling. The text reads, “When your diet says ‘no sweets’ (and you love ‘em) switch to Sucaryl and enjoy the sweet without the calories” (72). The woman’s facial expressions symbolize the emotional transformation consequent on her switch to a calorie-free sweetener. Other advertisements for Sucaryl appeal directly to a woman’s body image. A 1965 ad for Sucaryl features a slim, twenty-something woman in a bathing suit on the beach. The ad asks the consumer to use her imagination and to identify herself within the contrived photograph: “How

will you look in your bathing suit this summer? When the bare facts are out, how will you fit into this picture?" (8). The advertisement overtly asks the reader what all advertisements intimate. Similar to the Manoeuvre proposed in "*Chatelaine's* MM Diet," "Paste clippings of slim pretty figures on your refrigerator door" (27), these advertisements subtly refuse a woman the power to define her own ideal body type, asking that she identify herself with the photographic fiction and observe her figure in relation to the model. She embraces the dominant ideology, which governs her sense of self. If she participates in this self-appraisal, she will attempt, through disciplinary tactics or abjection, to match her "estranged self" (Beauvoir 375) to an ideal. Ironically, the fiction of an ideal self that the product promotes devours her identity, a subtly violent act of consumption and assimilation. The product appeals to the consumer's subjectivity: "How will you look in your bathing suit this summer?" (8). An example of what Louis Althusser calls interpellation, the woman reading this advertisement is addressed by a particular ideology that values women's physical appearance. By posing a question, the advertisement seems to give the reader the choice of to respond, addressing her as a free subject. However, the expected response is that the woman will be unhappy with how she imagines herself to look in a bathing suit and will then purchase the advertised product.

Similarly, beauty and fashion editorials in the magazine disgrace the mismanaged body and offer trendy solutions. In "Body Job," Dollery writes, "this is the year of the body, the year to let your skin show . . . Now let's suppose you've just done a figure spot check and found booms of surplus flab around your waist, hips, thighs and arms and that, generally, you sag in all the wrong places" (38). The nonword "booms" reflects the alien nature of unwanted bodily protrusions. The signifier, which has no apparent etymology in the English language, mimics its signified, which likewise retains no respectable place on the ideal body. Dollery advises a

woman to scrutinize her body and leaves little imaginative space for a positive interpretation of a large figure. In a culture that prizes slimness and punishes bodies that deviate from this standard, it is within a woman's best interest to shape her body in the image society esteems. Restrictive apparel, such as the girdle, is offered as an immediate cure to the unsightly display of "boomps." "You Can Have Your Baby and Your Figure Too" warns mothers about the unfavorable physical consequences of motherhood. The article offers tips for expecting mothers, one of which is to wear foundation garments during pregnancy to reduce the appearance of a swollen belly: "If you neglect your figure at this time it might remain as an undesirable and unnecessary souvenir of an otherwise very worth-while nine months" (Werker 61). A round figure, acceptable during pregnancy, is unsightly and meaningless afterward. In a peppy fashion editorial "Belts are Back!" fashion editor Vivian Wilcox justifies the current trend of a thin waist by the elegance, and perhaps intelligence, that it conveys: "the smaller the waist, the smarter" (50). She appeals to the consumer's desire for instant gratification through sudden and effortless bodily transformation: "Want to whittle a couple of inches off your [waist]? Exercise and diet will do it – in time – but for instant reduction, the best bet is a waist cinch. They're back in the stores after an absence of almost five years" (50). Written in the early 1960s, this article indicates that small waists are a resurfacing trend. The act of whittling, fashioning a piece of wood, is a metaphor that conceives of the body as a workable object. In "\$33 Worth of Fashion Solves a Figure Problem," clothing, rather than diet, is a solution to Jane's unsuitable silhouette. Jane, who used to be slim, faced the burden of her swollen figure. Wilcox asks, "How was she to create the illusion of better proportions until she could slim her waist and hips the six to seven inches necessary to regain her girlish slenderness?" (33). Jane models three outfits that use optical illusions to "slim her hipline" (33), disguising her body in order to recover her youthful figure.

Similar to diet articles that promised to uncover a new identity from beneath layers of fat, advertisements for undergarments hyperbolized the “transformative power of commodities” (Conor 108) and appealed to women’s ambivalent desires for self-expression and self-control. At times, advertisements for girdles and bras appropriated language from the feminist movement, borrowing words such as “freedom” and “new” to sell a product that, ironically, restricted women’s bodies and their freedom of movement. A 1961 ad for Sarong lingerie features a young, slim woman wearing nothing but a bra and a girdle, leaping jubilantly from one small birdcage into a slightly larger one. The text admits yet attempts to negate the idea of varying degrees of imprisonment connoted by the two birdcages, symbols of female captivity: “Let Sarong set you free” (105). An early ad for Warner’s in 1964 depicts a young woman in a stream, wearing a bra and girdle, and splashing herself with water. The text reads, “What you feel in a Warner’s – isn’t the bra. What you do feel is – free” (12). Paradoxically, the natural scenery characterizes the model’s liberty yet simultaneously establishes a contrast between the undomesticated freedom of the landscape and the restricted, civilized body in the foreground.

Ads for girdles often explicitly state the product’s ability to control, rather than free, the body and emphasize the positive social attention the product affords, a typical feature of the lifestyle ad. A Formfit advertisement features a pair of images: the first of a woman in her bedroom facing the camera, wearing a girdle and a bra, reflected in the mirror so that both her back and front appear, and the other of the same woman, smiling and confident in a skirt suit, walking on a public street. The text below emphasizes the girdle and the bra’s magical transformative abilities:

Suddenly . . . you know you look right! You’ve discovered Formfit Dress-Shapes! And suddenly you know you look wonderful . . . eyes follow you

wherever you go. Something wonderful happens when you slip into Formfit Dress-Shapers. They trim you a little here . . . fill out there . . . give in here . . . smoothly and naturally. Result? The slimmer, more fashionable figure you've always dreamt of. (9)

The model's public situation is essential for her sense of self-worth and self-expression. As Elizabeth Wilson writes of the street performer in "Living Dolls," "the living doll . . . lives only in the crowd; it is the gaze of the crowd that gives it its life. There must be an audience; the doll must be watched in order to exist" (117). Although the ad claims, "suddenly you know you look wonderful" (9), the consumer's evaluation of her appearance, and of her self, is necessarily dependent on the public's gaze. The spooky "eyes [that] follow you wherever you go" indicate the gothic: a theatrical dynamic of audience and performer that borders on one of stalking and fear.

Warner's and WonderBra ran several full-page advertisements in *Chatelaine* that promised to perfect the flawed female figure. While their earlier ad features the young woman in the stream, their later ads indicted nature as an anathema. A Warner's advertisement in 1966 depicts a woman's mid-section, covered with a girdle. The text above states, "If Nature Didn't, Warner's Will" (151). The text below focuses on segments of her body, waist and thighs, and explains Warner's ability to repair nature's faults: "Would you have a good shape if it weren't for a few little inches? The Young Thing by Warner's will give you less middle. Warner's will give you a wispier waist and leaner thighs. Warner's will do that with that great nature-fighter, nylon and uncovered Lycra spandex" (151). While this ad suggests that nature's initial mistakes are corrigible, some ads provoke a woman to fear that, as she ages, nature will warp her figure. The "revolutionary new girdle" (16) from WonderBra contains "strategically placed muscle

panels” that “helps restore your natural girdle of muscles. Flattens your stomach. Tightens your hips and thighs. ... Trims years off your figure. ... Try Wonder Control. And bring back the girl in you” (16). The appeal in advertisements for women to either suspend or to reverse the natural course of the aging body is symptomatic of a culture that encourages women “to preserve themselves as others preserve furniture or canned food” (Beauvoir 505).

In the 1960s, femininity reached an impasse; some women adhered to traditional roles whereas others sought to redefine themselves. Dieting embodied the modern woman’s paradoxical position: she could discover a new self as a result of prudent micro-practices, such as calorie counting. The existential urge to explore and define the self was at its zenith for women during the 1960s and was daringly expressed in *Chatelaine*; however, the cultural fixation with body image redirected women’s subjective energies for self-discovery against themselves. Control of the body’s appetite and shape rather than creative or intellectual enterprise became an alternative means of self-expression for women during the 1960s. In their different ways, doctors, dieticians, editors, and advertisers all contributed to the creation of a social standard that revered the slim, disciplined body and sought to correct the large figure they believed silently attested to immorality and abnormality. By dictating the terms of consumption, they used both duress and wish fulfillment to pacify the modern female consumer and to turn her aspirations for self-expression against her self. However, women who read *Chatelaine* struggled to avoid the sensory seductions of food because not only did the magazine contain images of and recipes for forbidden foods such as cakes but also these women were responsible for most of the household cooking. The next chapter addresses the presence and significance, in the magazine, of women’s role as cook and baker.

Chapter Two

“A Womanly Art”: Culinary Creativity in *Chatelaine* 1959-1969

In the previous chapter, I argue that doctors, dieticians, and editors writing for *Chatelaine* esteemed slimness and self-restraint in women. Advertisements for diet products and foundation garments complemented the pursuit of a physical ideal that these articles promoted. Mirrors served as useful instruments for self-reflection and self-evaluation, yet often served as a medium by which a woman could pursue an ideal, constructed in her imagination and reflected back to her in an advertisement. Techniques of self-objectification and self-restraint encouraged women to direct their mental and emotional energies against their bodies, which were sometimes described in grotesque and gothic terms. In this chapter, I explore how the magazine also fostered a woman's potential as creating subject rather than created object, as consuming rather than consumable.

In the final chapters of *The Edible Woman*, Marian's relationships with herself and with society shift abruptly. Throughout the novel, Marian forfeits her agency, referring to herself in the third person “she.” However, in the denouement, Marian learns to manipulate rather than capitulate to pacifying forces. The narrative returns to the first person “I,” accompanying her transition to a self-actualizing character. Marian's transformation from self-objectification to self-expression is inspired by and displayed through two critical actions related to food: parodying the stereotypical role of housewife by baking and serving a miniaturized and deliciously frosted version of herself and, then, eating it. Marian's creative act of baking a cake from scratch and serving it to her fiancé emulates yet mocks the type of stereotypical femininity depicted in *Chatelaine*. As Keith writes, Marian's decision to bake a cake is “a curiously traditional action but one in keeping with her continual desire to act as a normal woman. But this

conventional act soon reveals itself as anything but normal” (62). To explain how this act is both “conventional” yet “anything but normal,” I focus on articles and advertisements where cake is the central communicative symbol in definitions of femininity and courtship rituals. The second critical juncture occurs when Marian eats the cake, an act in which she overcomes her fear of food. In contrast to the previous chapter, I explore articles and advertisements that encourage women to savor rather than to fear the pleasures of indulgence.

Supermarkets in the 1950s and 1960s held a “dizzying array of processed foods” (Levenstein 114), which were both celebrated and feared by consumers. In their documentation of oral histories of women in England after the Second World War, Andrea Davies and Richard Elliott explore the paradox of empowerment and disempowerment women felt as they acquired agency and responsibility in a disorienting marketplace. They write, “While we might expect that expanded choice would be welcomed by consumers and embraced as a behavioural, cognitive and symbolic freedom in the shopping process, many of our informants report that they found increased choice far from immediately empowering. They felt anxious and over-whelmed by the possibilities of choice” (1113). Although food and advertising legislation existed to protect consumers, the magazine repeatedly reminded women that they needed to educate themselves in order to navigate unfamiliar consumer landscapes, such as supermarkets, or what *Chatelaine’s* Una Abrahamson calls “the grocery labyrinth” (“You Tell Us” 18).

In September 1967, *Chatelaine* introduced a new monthly column “Of Consuming Interest” to educate and empower female shoppers and to help them cope in a diversifying food economy. In a 1968 interview with John Turner, head of the new Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, Abrahamson asks if he has any advice for Canadian consumers: “Mr. Turner said that he believed that in today’s complex marketplace, with the average consumer being

bombarded with sales talk, the choice of what to buy is difficult. . . . While consumers must have pertinent buying information, there must still be freedom of choice – even to make mistakes” (“Help?” 22). Turner speaks of an increasingly cluttered and confusing marketplace where choice is both a blessing and a bane. In an interview with Eleanor Ordway, director of Consumer Service and Information, Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, Abrahamson asks what the department “can do to help the average shopper” (“Big Sister” 60). Ordway responds, “We’re all consumers . . . and while legislation can protect us from hazards and fraud, we, too, have an obligation to make ourselves familiar with available information” (60). *Chatelaine* sought to inform consumers about modern appliances and new ingredients with articles such as “Know Your Oranges” (Abrahamson 92), “Guide for a Smart Shopper” (Abrahamson 62), “A Bride’s Guide to Kitchen Utensils” (Collett 59) and features on how to select and prepare then-unfamiliar products such as artichokes, pineapples, and melons.

Additionally, processed and convenience foods became increasingly prominent in the 1960s, as “[i]mmmediately after the war, chemists had set about putting wartime innovations to profitable peacetime use” (Levenstein 109). Frozen, powdered, and canned foods were particularly advantageous for working women. Linda Hoare’s article, “Quick and Easy Cooking for Two,” offers recipes for the young working wife, reminding readers that “there are a variety of products on the market today designed to lighten work” (57). The recipes make use of modern food technologies and include ingredients such as frozen onion rings, instant chocolate pudding mix, and slice-and-bake cookies. As Korinek notes, advertisements for processed and convenience food increased in the magazine in the 1960s (124). Because convenience foods required little preparation, unlike meals made from scratch, to “assuage guilt” (Korinek 146) among women, advertisers had to strike a balance between such products’ convenience and the

ingenuity required to prepare them. A popular product that epitomizes this trend is Betty Crocker instant cake mix. Although the product's convenience was promoted, "marketers realized that cake-baking was still too important a part of the housewife's self-image to eliminate her contribution completely" (Levenstein 116). To give women a sense of participation in the baking process, Betty Crocker cake mix required the addition of a real egg "to preserve the impression that [a woman] was still baking" (Korinek 147).

As new food technologies and flavors flooded the marketplace, nostalgia for past culinary practices imbued articles and advertisements. Despite the popularity of instant cake mixes, some women worried that the kitchen culture of the past, the skill set needed to prepare food from basic ingredients, and the satisfying flavors of homemade fare were threatened by the ease and insipidness of convenience foods. Many of Collett's cooking articles such as "Four Shortcakes You Can't Buy" (64) resisted the enthusiasm for convenience foods, criticizing their lack of taste. In "Old Time Favorites," Collett reminisces,

Not so very long ago, in large friendly lamplit kitchens throughout our land, women with patient hands skillfully churned butter, fed the fire, set bread in a dough tray . .

Something good was always cooking on the big black wood stove. Now we can again enjoy those hearty old-time favorites – as delicious as ever but, thanks to modern

products and methods, they can now be made with far less effort and time. (40)

Collett's portrait of past times represents a scene that many women reading the magazine would not remember. Although she refers to "modern products and methods," she refers not to convenience foods but to the use of popular, basic ingredients and methods to achieve the same ends as women "not so very long ago." Collett quotes a recipe for Mock Devonshire Cream from her grandmother's generation: "Let the evening's milk stand in a cool place until ten the next

morning. Then put it on a slow fire to cook for 6 to 8 hours, or until it bubbles. Take it off the fire and let it stand for 24 hours, when the cream will be ready to be skimmed” (41). Below this, she provides an updated recipe using modern products and appliances such as handheld beaters and store-bought whipping cream: “Beat the whipping cream with 2 oz soft cream cheese and 1 tbs sugar until stiff. Keep chilled until serving time” (41).

The recipes, although modernized, reach backwards to a mythical milieu rather than forwards to a kitchen culture of speedy food preparation. Luce Giard explains how new technologies in the kitchen affect culinary practices. She writes of modern women, “many gestures and processes that were commonplace for my grandmothers’ generation, ways of operating that were part of a young girl’s normal apprenticeship and of her (average) *savoir faire* capital, have been erased from common consciousness and no longer subsist except in the memories of certain people” (Certeau 202). Giard’s mild longing attests to the triumphs of modern technology yet also registers a discontent with modern culinary practices, tools, and ingredients that Atwood sometimes shares and that the magazine expressed. Collett seeks to restore memories of traditional “gestures” and “processes,” such as churning butter, to women’s consciousness, yet mediates between such kinesthetic memories and current technologies. Further, the recipes of the earlier time called for rich yet basic ingredients such as butter and sugar, which were now inadvisable for the woman concerned about her figure. Similarly, the article “Superb Cakes with New-World Ways and Old Country Traditions” aims to bridge traditional cooking methods with modern lifestyles, technologies, and food products. The sentimental article seeks to revive endangered culinary pleasures of the past and suit them to modernity: “Aren’t we lucky that old-world cakes – with their mouth-watering flavors, unusual textures and homemade goodness – are still with us! Unfortunately, in our obsession with speed,

ease and diets, the practice of making homeland cakes could be in danger of disappearing” (51). The recipes include specificities about the ideal temperature for ingredients such as eggs, butter, and milk, and the types of flour and butter that may be used depending on the recipe. Collett’s prophecy in the article that “the practice of making homeland cakes could be in danger of disappearing” (51) reflects a similar concern in the late 1960s that traditional femininity was fading.

The concern that cooking technologies threatened traditional baking practices indicates a deeper concern that modernity imperiled femininity. A *Chatelaine* article from 1967, “The Dangerous Disappearance of ‘Woman’” by Barbara Frum, describes Montreal psychiatrist Dr. Karl Stern’s concern that society’s “infatuation with technology for its own sake, our unwillingness to accept anything on faith, our tendency to think of people as things that can be managed, planned for by computers as though they were boxes on a shelf” (18) threatens the passive, compassionate, and intuitive female that is integral to social well-being. Dr. Stern’s simile draws a resemblance between humans and consumer goods, “boxes on a shelf,” a motif in *The Edible Woman*. Situating Dr. Stern’s vision in opposition to that of feminists Friedan and Beauvoir, Frum sympathizes with his appeal to consider the social consequences of women’s equality with men: “The womanly values must be maintained to keep a balance in society between the male quality of rational judgment and female poetic insight. Male intellect and female heart” (18, 133). Stern fixes gender within binary oppositions based on biological differences. He believes that women’s “bodies are formed to receive, keep and nurture, and their form of creativeness, of motherhood, pertains to containing and sheltering human life. . . . Woman’s form of creativeness is not in making things work, but in growing things, nurturing them, yet allowing them to follow their own mysterious law of becoming” (qtd. in Frum 134).

Akin to the mystery of conception, the patiently maturing fetus, and a woman's unique ability to produce food for her infant, cooking embodies enigmatic feminine functions. Beauvoir herself acknowledges the cook's mysteries, which she calls "alchemies" (427). If cooking is understood as a mystical operation, the patience required classifies it as an intrinsic feminine art as defined by Stern. Similar to Collett's descriptions of a traditional kitchen culture, Stern's ideal female is partly myth and partly nostalgia for a time past.

As many women were still responsible for much of the housework, *Chatelaine* often described common household tasks, such as cooking, as artistic endeavors to make the work more appealing but also to acknowledge women's creative proficiency. A 1966 advertisement for the Magazine Publishers of America features a young woman, casually dressed and seated comfortably on the floor with a bucket of paint and a roller. She wears the expression of the pensive artist but carries the tools of the house painter. The ad reads, "Within these pages, she finds information and products that sharpen her taste . . . stimulate her enthusiasm for her many other appetites. . . . She's a 'Jack-of-all-Trades' . . . with an artist's touch" (45). The advertisement raises housework to the status of art. This illusion is no accident. In *The Feminine Mystique*, Friedan quotes a motivational researcher from the 1960s who says that those in his profession "help [the housewife] think of the modern home as the artist's studio, the scientist's laboratory" (225). The trend to convince women that housework is art is perceptible in the use of the word "homemaker" in place of "housewife," which became a general trend in *Chatelaine*. The word "house" denotes an architectural structure and "wife" signifies a subject position in dependent relation to a husband, whereas "home" implies a familiar and friendly space that has been created by a "maker." Friedan criticizes such deceptive spins on housework that engender "a world where women, by merely being women and bearing children, will earn the same respect

accorded men for their creative achievements” (142). According to Friedan and her followers, the illusion conceals the ennui and boredom of housework, or what Beauvoir calls “the torture of Sisyphus” (425), preventing women from pursuing intellectual or creative interests outside the home.

Although *Chatelaine* was attentive to criticisms such as those of Friedan, some articles in the magazine promoted cooking as an art. The idea put forth in such articles is that in the same way a writer or painter creates distinctive work, a woman could express herself through her baking. New products that favored imaginative cuisine were featured in *Chatelaine*, products such as Cake Mate’s new Creamy Icing Tubes, Glossy Writing Gels, and plastic decorating tips for cake decorating (Abrahamson, “Kitchen Goodies” 10). Collett’s article “Serve a Dish that’s Distinctly Yours” contains structured recipes and menus but offers women the opportunity to make them her “own creations” (38) by adjusting flavors and garnishes. Similar to a Romantic poet, or the intuitive woman in Dr. Stern’s fantasy, the baker attends to fanciful impulses that stem from a familiarity with cooking. In another article, “Leftovers: An Artistic Challenge,” Collett draws on her mother’s saying that ““anyone can cook with a well-stocked larder but it takes an artist to make a meal out of nothing”” (49). The article includes brief recipes for sandwiches, casseroles, and pastries that can be made with leftover meats. Collett’s feature, “Gourmet Cooking for Apartment Living,” provides “recipes for the experimental apartment cook” (46) and a how-to flavor chart for the “creative cook” (46). A table of spices, classified according to flavors such as Strong Savory, Licorice Flavor, and Piquant Spice, refines the reader’s palate and encourages improvisation if a particular spice is unavailable. Such articles provide a practical lexicon for readers unfamiliar with nuances of flavor, taste, and texture. Cooking’s increasingly specialized nomenclature reflects the need to understand what may be

new and strange, but it also elevates cooking, a common household task, to the level of art and science. A knowledge and mastery of the ingredients, tools, and critical senses needed to create and to evaluate food emerge through the use of such lexicons and cooking advice columns in the magazine.

The idea that cooking is a feminine art also surfaces in baking and dessert advertisements. An advertisement for Royal Instant Puddings invokes the Romantic notion of spontaneous poetic inspiration, yet infantilizes the reader by likening cooking to child's play. The recipe for Pretty Parfaits reads, "Try arranging one flavor on top of another, perhaps adding a dash of food coloring or a bright layer of fruit. Or do whatever inspiration tells you to. It's fun prettying up parfaits made with Royal Instant Pudding" (75). The phrase "prettying up" (75) relates the woman preparing food to a young girl dressing and beautifying a doll, or perhaps a woman styling her hair, make-up, and clothes. Although the advertisement suggests, "Do whatever inspiration tells you to" (75), there are particular culinary conventions that govern what is possible and acceptable to create, just as there are customs that dictate what clothing is appropriate for a particular social function. In the novel, by shaping and adorning a cake in the image of herself, Marian exaggerates the metaphorical relationship between women and dessert. Her parody transcends the conventions of what is acceptable for a woman to create and to serve. Peter's rejection of Marian's creation affirms that she has offended his image of her as a "sensible girl" (100).

The language in several ads in *Chatelaine* likens food presentation to self-adornment. Such allusions contribute to a larger courtship narrative in which appetizing food offered by a woman seduces a potential mate. Collett's article "Garnishes" likens food presentation to getting oneself ready for a party: "Good food for both family and guests deserves a last-minute finishing

touch – and the simple garnish is always the best. Choose garnishes that are crisp, colorful and flavorful, and that contrast with or complement the food you are adorning” (51). Like “prettying up,” the word “adorning” compares garnishes to jewelry, make-up, or clothing, designed to seduce a mate. Catchy phrases such as “Party Dress for Angel Food” (65) in an Ogilvie Real Cake Mix ad or “Fruit Puffs . . . All dressed for a party the easy way” (57) in a Del Monte advertisement hints at gendered dynamics in modern dining rituals where the woman sweetly tempts a potential suitor. The metaphor communicates the resemblance between a woman and a dessert; well dressed and adorned, it is irresistible.

Embodying the duality of good and evil, dutiful women. and by extension the food they prepare, are often depicted as tempting and irresistible. An advertisement for Swift’s Premium meats depicts a man kissing a woman who holds a plate of bacon. The text reads, “That sweet-smoke aroma of Swift’s Premium Bacon crisping in the skillet speaks a man’s language, beckoning him to breakfast in a jiffy!” (62). In the advertisement, the plate of bacon is positioned directly in front of the woman’s body. The strip of bacon that the man pulls from the plate appears nearly inseparable from the woman, creating the grotesque illusion that he strips the bacon from off her shoulder. The kiss that he plants on her neck, while simultaneously grasping his breakfast, seals the metaphoric relationship between the woman and the meat.

The notion that food “speaks a man’s language” (62) privileges culinary rather than verbal communication between husband and wife. It is an axiom that Marian initially believes when she decides to use the cake, rather than language, as a communicative symbol: “What she needed was something that avoided words, she didn’t want to get tangled up in a discussion” (315). A 1959 Five Roses Flour advertisement features a young couple together in the kitchen. The woman, wearing a blouse and an apron, ices a chocolate cake. The woman’s husband, home

from the office and dressed in business attire, surveys. The patronizing language discussed earlier is replaced by the patriarchal gaze. The caption, “Proud moment! Her first try at Homebaking a Happy Success” (59), equates feminine pride with culinary achievement. The woman’s newfound talent for baking is a rite of passage ushering her into womanhood. Further, the text below the caption elicits the cake’s communicative function as love: “She wants to show her love in so many ways, this happy young home-maker. Good things to eat is one of them. Good things she homebakes herself, with loving care” (59). To suggest feeding another as both a means of creative expression and an extension for linguistic communication devalues a woman’s status as a speaking subject.

An advertisement for E.D. Smith borrows the temptation story of Adam and Eve to narrate a modern fiction. The ad, for apple pie filling, depicts the image of a man whispering in a woman’s ear. A large, bitten apple, symbolic of sin, hovers above them: “If an ordinary apple tempted Adam think what a pie made with E.D. Smith Apple Pie filling would have done . . . That’s a lot of temptation” (55). A slightly later ad for cherry pie filling engages with a similar script in which food is the central communicative symbol: “A cherry pie made with E.D. Smith Cherry Pie Filling may not be the only way to a man’s heart . . . But it’s a pretty good way to start” (105). Christian concepts of temptation and sin inform the ethical discourse of dieting, as discussed in the previous chapter. However, these food advertisements use temptation and sin as an integral factor in such courtship narratives where a woman tempts, catches, and pleases a man. Whereas in the dieting content, food is a temptation to be resisted, in these advertisements, food is aligned with a female temptress.

The assumption that the cook will please those she feeds is a common trope in advertising for baking products, one that plays with the dramatic tension between artist and critic

and that measures a woman's worth according to that of her cake. Beauvoir writes that "the cook's effort is evidently transcended towards the future. . . . The validity of the cook's work is to be found only in the mouths of those around her table; she needs their approbation" (429). The baker's creation is neither enduring art nor art for art's sake; it is perishable and utilitarian, its worth is contingent on her husband's satisfaction. Advertisements depict an illusory domestic sphere, where a woman's artistic production in the kitchen requires validation from her family, her husband especially. Giard acknowledges the cook's role as artist, yet also as benefactor: "The preparation of a meal furnishes that rare joy of producing something oneself, of fashioning a fragment of reality, of knowing the joys of demiurgic miniaturization, all the while securing the gratitude of those who will consume it by way of pleasant and innocent seductions" (Certeau 158). In a way, Marian's creation at the end of the novel is such an act as she fashions a diminutive version of herself designed to seduce but also test to Peter. Giard believes that "demiurgic miniaturization," assuming the role of Maker and creating life in miniature, may be experienced through the act of cooking. Giard's statement suggests that beyond the delights of posing as a creator lies the satisfaction of approval. This, more so than the pleasures of creativity itself, is the selling point in ads for baking products. Unlike painting or poetry, dessert is not an art destined to endure. Beauvoir's observation that the cook "needs [the] approbation" of her family and guests in order for her work to be complete and meaningful recognizes that for cooking to be an art in and of itself is an impossibility for women who seek the approval of others.

In these advertisements, the man is often cast in the role of critic. An advertisement for Royal Instant Puddings features a man in the foreground, his thumb against his chin in a critical pose, his eyes appraising a chocolate pie and by extension his wife, who watches expectantly in

the background. An ad for Baker's Sweet Chocolate emphasizes the skill and patience needed to bake a cake: "A Challenge to Bake . . . but a triumph of a cake! Even his mother never made a cake this good! It's not easy" (16). Although only the cake is visible in the ad, the husband as both consumer and critic is implied. His approval determines not only the quality of the cake, but also that of his wife. In this advertisement, the wife displaces and surpasses her husband's mother and assumes the role of primary caregiver. The comparison between the husband's mother and the wife hints at a hierarchical exchange between male and female where the female feeds the male, as well as a proximity between food and female that is rooted in women's biological function as producing food for their infants. As a child, the husband was not only fed by his mother but was fed from his mother. The legacy of this primal affinity is that love and food share an "intimate proximity" (Certeau 195) that is both corporal and emotional. As a symbol, cake bears a mythology: sweet like breast milk and carnal like flesh, it represents the body of the eternal mother who comforts and nourishes in times of distress. This representation of woman as kind and nurturing, while equally corporeal, serves as the opposite of the grotesque female, the double who inhabits the shadow of the sacrificial mother.

Inevitably, the young bride cooks not just for herself but also for her family. A 1962 advertisement for Magic Baking Powder depicts the young woman in the ad as intellectual, artist, and mother, an ideal modern woman. Smiling, she pulls warm Beef Marguerite from the oven and admires it as she would a painting or a newborn child. The caption reads, "Smart Girl, another creation" (61). Although the ad suspends time within a brief moment of personal satisfaction, as Beauvoir argues, the baker's sense of fulfillment relies primarily on the approval of others. The ad features the artist admiring her creation, yet the text reminds the reader that the woman's duty is to her family: "Looks good, smells good, tastes good! – but what you don't see

is the effect it has on another sense . . . the lovely sense of satisfaction you have when you bake something extra good for your family! That special sunny-inside feeling is your birthright” (61). The fiction that receiving pleasure from baking is a right gifted to women conceals the reality that for many women, baking was neither pleasurable nor a choice but instead a gendered imperative. The final experience of satisfaction is not depicted visually in the advertisement, as it is the expected and desired ending to a common narrative in advertising: the affective narrative.

As Leiss et al. explain, affective narratives, rather than symbolic or functional associations, became the means by which advertisers sold products. In advertising in the late 1960s, the product became a totem, “a representation of a clan or group that we recognize by its activities and its members’ shared enjoyment of the product” (200), within a social and affective narrative “less concerned with the nature of satisfaction than with its social meaning – the way it integrates the individual into a consumption tribe” (200). However, the advertisements for cake represent both “the nature of satisfaction” and the “social meaning” acquired from baking a cake, as the two are depicted as inseparable. A woman’s ability to satisfy through her cooking is portrayed as integral to her role as a social being, a married woman. The affective quality of advertisements strengthens their narrative believability and seeks to impress the consumer through emotional persuasion. Using the affective narrative of new marriage and love and the cake as conduit for social initiation, the advertisements depict a timeless and timely romantic fiction of husband and wife.

A series of advertisements in 1965 for Magic Baking Powder captures both the affective and the symbolic function of baking and serving cake. The ads can be distinguished by their simple, classic tone, which contrasts the colorful animation of most baking ads. Magic Baking Powder sells its product by reconstructing an essential, and symbolic, femaleness. These ads

suggest that true womanhood can be recovered through the practice of baking. The first ad, in March, features two framed images: a contented woman and a handsome chocolate cake. The frame memorializes the moment of satisfaction experienced by the baker and situates the advertisement within the domestic sphere. The text endorses the emotional pleasures consequent of baking:

Women who bake get three kinds of joy. The joy of seeing how the family loves the good things you make. The pride when guests are frankly impressed. And a subtle, very feminine feeling . . . something to do with a womanly art, a caring about people, a homeyness. A fragrance in your kitchen. The special flavor and goodness that only fresh ingredients, blended by you and freshly baked, can *ever* have. (45)

The type of warm and nurturing femininity, the “womanly art,” described is one that reflects Dr. Stern’s characterization of women. A second ad also speaks of baking as a feminine art, one that grows from creative ardor yet that is ultimately rooted in love for others: “Baking is like giving. It fulfills a special kind of love. A love that makes a woman a mother . . . and a wife. A love of creating irresistible things with your own hands . . . Your family will be so proud of your creation. . . . Yes, love is a part of baking at home” (83). The ad brings together the woman’s roles as mother, wife, temptress, and artist to certify the act of baking as the epitome of femininity. A slightly later ad pictures a woman joyfully watching her husband eat a cake. The text reads, “Baking has so many rewards . . . this is only one of them . . . A heartmelting look that tells you you’ve done something extra and something very special. Because he notices – you feel warm and womanly. These are the subtle joys of baking for him” (123). The husband’s “look” is a metonym for his approving gaze, as his approval validates her art and creates meaning in her life. The sensuous alliterative adjectives “warm,” and “womanly” classify the act

of baking for a loved one as emanating maternal kindness and sexual appeal. In the novel, Atwood ridicules these notions. Indeed, Marian's cake is "very special" (123), yet this is because it is bizarre, to Peter even distasteful, rather than beautiful. Although Marian bakes the cake for Peter, her sensibilities are neither "warm" nor "womanly" but rather audacious and slightly hostile.

Most of the cake ads do not show the woman eating but instead feeding her family or husband. This convention is analogous to the stereotype of the sacrificial wife and mother portrayed in articles and advertisements for diets and related products. In *The Edible Woman*, Marian daringly eats the cake that she bakes. However, she serves the remainder of the cake to Duncan: "It gave me a peculiar sense of satisfaction to see him eat" (330). Her sentiments express the "warm and womanly" (Magic 123) satisfaction described in baking advertisements. The significance of these gestures will be detailed in the following chapter; however, I will now briefly contextualize Marian's act of eating the cake by exploring *Chatelaine's* rare, yet present, discussions of the pleasures of eating.

Indeed, contrary to diet articles and advertisements that promoted new, modern foods such as Sucaryl and Metrecal, some recipes, articles, and advertisements in the magazine favored taste and texture over calorie and fat content. A *Chatelaine* recipe competition "\$1000 Family Favorites Winners" documents that "cream, sweet or sour, was a most favored ingredient – so much for calories!" (30). Rebellion against dieting characterizes the latter half of this statement. Cream's rich texture and flavor is venerated; its fat content, deemed harmful by doctors and dieticians, is ignored. "How is Your Taste?" published in 1959 inspires readers to develop their palate. M. Spencer writes:

The ability to distinguish fine nuances of flavor . . . is not some mysterious talent. It is something that anyone can cultivate. One has only to develop an appreciative awareness of the food he [or she] eats. That is, we need to take time to select and savor each morsel of food. . . . And savoring good flavors is one of the everyday pleasures in this world that few of us want to miss. (33, 94)

The article discusses the aesthetic nuances of food such as shape, color, and even sound. To confess that food exists to be enjoyed contradicts authorities who warn of food's pleasurable qualities and fattening effects. As Lupton observes, "the conception of the body as conduit and source of hedonistic pleasure . . . overtly challenges the ascetic notion of self-discipline, of dietary control as a means of dispelling the temptations of the flesh rather than inviting them" (151). However, the pleasure that Spencer describes remains circumscribed within acceptable limits. The adjectives "fine," and "good," and the verbs "cultivate" and "savor" indicate that the appreciation of food needs to be a refined, rather than overly indulgent, practice.

An antagonism to dieting, although minor, existed in *Chatelaine* and some of its readers. For example, responding to the abundance of diet articles in *Chatelaine*, Mrs. Lawrence Butt writes in 1962, "I have just finished reading your MM Diet [July]. I would like just for once, in any magazine, to be able to read of how to *gain* weight" (144). Although Mrs. Butt in her request was a minority among the ensemble of the many women who wanted to lose weight, her letter indicates a current of thought contrary to an ideology that supported weight loss. In a characteristically bold editorial "Decisions, Decisions, Decisions!" Doris Anderson remembers, "Grandma weighed a handsome weight, ate what she liked, and was considered a fine figure of a woman. A dressmaker tactfully dealt with her special figure problems. But we've set a standard of youthful slimness that means most of us go through life perpetually hungry while we strive to

look like refugees from a Paris fashion show” (1). Anderson romanticizes the past and questions modern women’s endless endeavor for physical perfection. She suggests that women could subtly defy rigid weight standards by letting go, by exhibiting a softened attitude towards social pressures that Dr. McHenry, the expert male opinion in “Canadian Women are Too Fat,” defined as “careless” (48).

Twice in her editorials in the 1960s, Anderson borrows the idiom “to have one’s cake and eat it, too” to express women’s social status. Although perhaps coincidental, the idiom is particularly appropriate as it embodies the personal and social significance of eating cake, an indulgent food. In the 1964 editorial “That as the Year that Was,” Anderson reports on women’s emerging status: “It is possible to be a mother and not be a self-sacrificing ‘mom.’ It is possible to be a ‘female’ female without making a fetish of femininity and to be a ‘lady’ without letting the mind languish. . . . We’ve always been told, we women, that we ‘can’t have our cake and eat it, too.’ But today we almost can” (1). The adverb “almost” points to women’s continued struggle for gender equality. Anderson charts a middle course between, on the one side, professionals such as Dr. Stern and advertisements such as those for Magic Baking Powder that establish “a fetish of femininity” (1) and, on the other side, feminists such as Beauvoir and Friedan who reject all feminine essentialism. Although it is not Anderson’s point, understood literally within the context of the 1960s, the idiom “to have one’s cake and eat it, too” expresses the potential for women to enjoy the pleasures of both creating and eating a cake, of being a “mother” without becoming “a self-sacrificing ‘mom’” (1). In “A Fable for Today’s Woman,” Anderson discusses modern women’s strength in defining themselves yet also their challenges in doing so beyond the shadows of current stereotypes: “Never in history have women been able to shape their lives so much to their own liking as they can today. If we could just get over the habit

of measuring our lives against the current labels of our times, we could, in actual fact, have our cake and eat it, too (almost!)” (1). Again, the word “almost” reveals Anderson’s hesitancy to admit women’s complete independence. The words “shape” and “measuring” subtly invoke the cultural attention to women’s figures and dieting. Yet, Anderson uses the idiom to describe the potential for women to define new social identities for themselves and to almost find fulfillment despite desisting from stereotypical roles such as the slim and virtuous wife.

The coexistent doctrines of dietary control, as discussed in Chapter One, and the attitudes that food should be enjoyed evince the competing modes of subjectivity present at this time.

However, as Lupton explains, each is mutually dependent:

[T]he ‘rational’ imperatives around eating certain foods and denying oneself other foods in the quest for good health and a slim body that are currently privileged in western societies may be rejected or ignored, giving way to urges to eat prohibited foods in the quest for self-expression and emotional and bodily release. In consumer culture there is, therefore, a continual dialectic between the pleasures of consumption and the ethic of asceticism as means of constructing the self: each would have no meaning without the other. (153)

Lupton speaks of contemporary societies, yet her observation applies to a similar dialectic that fashioned the modern woman in the 1960s. While dieting discourse in *Chatelaine* envisioned a self-effacing female population, some articles and advertisements voiced the opposite. In a society where rigid dietary discipline is privileged, eating forbidden foods, such as cake, is an expressive act that subverts professional and cultural strictures that inhibit natural female appetites and figures. Both the fear of the female figure and appetites in the context of *The Edible Woman* will be discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter 3

Part One: “What peculiar creatures”: The Grotesque Female Body in *The Edible Woman*

In this chapter, I explore Marian’s fears of the grotesque female body and her desire for a secure sense of identity. I argue that these two opposed yet mutually dependent constructions of the female body exist in Margaret Atwood’s fiction as a reflection of attitudes towards women’s bodies in the 1960s, as demonstrated in *Chatelaine*. Dieting and self-restraint was sold to women in the 1960s as a means to self-fulfillment, offering the paradoxical goal of self-realization through imposed practices of containment and abjection. The grotesque elements in *The Edible Woman* convey Marian’s threatened sense of self. I argue that Marian aims to protect and have control over herself and that her refusal of food is an unconscious articulation of the desire to avoid losing her sense of self. Further, I demonstrate how Atwood’s description of women’s bodies as edible products, a recurrent theme in her later fiction and poetry, reflects the metaphoric relationships between women and food present in *Chatelaine* in the 1960s. The novel crosses the boundaries between realism and fantasy, gravity and humour, by reflecting and distorting white, middle-class Canadian women’s culture in the 1960s.

The Edible Woman is a coming-of-age narrative told from the perspective of Marian MacAlpin, a young woman working for a marketing research company, Seymour Surveys, and engaged to Peter Wollander, described in the novel as “ordinariness raised to perfection, like the youngish well-groomed faces of cigarette ads” (65-66). When the novel opens Marian “was all right” (3), but as the narrative progresses she curiously loses control over her body. Atwood cleverly expresses the dissociation of Marian’s mind and body by switching the narrative from

first-person to the third person in Part Two of the novel. Atwood's experimental technique reflects the sense of confusion yet also of self-discovery the narrator faces.

The novel's existential theme follows Marian's gradual awakening to 1960s consumer culture, her intense yet temporary angst, and finally the first evidence of her creative self-expression. The gothic atmosphere of dread and accompanying theme of metamorphosis in parts of the novel are manifestations of Marian's primary concern: "She only wanted to know what she was becoming, what direction she was taking, so she could be prepared. It was waking up in the morning one day and finding she had already changed without being aware of it that she dreaded" (241). Marian's aberrant conduct and bizarre hallucinations destabilize her sense of security, yet her deviations from normalcy provide much of the imaginative content in the novel. Her identity crisis appears to her first in "a dream in which," Marian relates, "I had looked down and seen my feet beginning to dissolve, like melting jelly, and had put on a pair of rubber boots just in time only to find that the ends of my fingers were turning transparent" (44). The sensation of her body as soft and diffuse becomes a motif throughout the novel. Marian's acute sensitivity to bodily sensations generates her anxiety but also initiates her self-discovery. Through self-objectification and a split self-perception, rendered by Atwood's switch from first- to third-person narration, Marian comes to know herself as a body subject to the forces of nature and the demands of her culture. Caught "between parodies and possibilities for the self" (Bordo 438), Marian finds it increasingly difficult to maintain a sense of identity. Food and eating become the negative condition through which Marian's body tries to save itself from becoming an edible object. She often envisions the women in her environment as lower life forms and develops empathy for other living beings based on her shared identification with them as susceptible to consumption. Her unconscious choice is not unusual. As the dieting content in *Chatelaine*

reveals, women were encouraged and found the means to discover or recover identity through food practices. As a practice that is necessary for survival, that carries moral and symbolic weight, and that at that time rested heavily on the national conscience, eating, or not eating, existed as a powerful medium of self-definition.

Marian's inability to eat certain foods mimics a trope in Victorian writing related both to women's bodies and their marketable marriage value. In *The Flesh Made Word*, Helena Michie notices two absences in Victorian realist novels: mention of the heroine eating and of hunger (12-13). The ideal heroine ate little and when she did consumed delicately, contrary to the fallen woman who was plump and ate heartily. Michie argues that dainty appetites symbolized virginity and, therefore, carried moral significance. She ties such representations back to the Fall: "The delicate woman who does not assert her physical needs serves to recuperate the Fall and to reestablish lost innocence. Mythologically, her role is to refuse the apple and to keep her mouth firmly shut to temptation" (23), whether to eat or to speak out of turn. Furthermore, Michie observes that malnutrition and anorectic behavior frequently characterize Victorian heroines' initial confrontations with marriage: "Weakness, pallor, and rejection of food are signs of transition in the refined heroine, as for the first time she contemplates marriage and related sexual 'duties.' . . . Many . . . Victorian heroines also fall mysteriously ill at the critical moment between their admission of love and the hero's proposal" (16, 25). Atwood borrows the literary archetype of the self-sacrificing and morally upstanding yet curiously unwell bride-to-be in her portrayal of a modern heroine. Indeed, Marian experiences these troubling symptoms after she becomes engaged to Peter. For example, unable to finish her steak at the restaurant, she tells Peter "'I don't seem to be hungry anymore. I guess I'm full.' She meant to indicate by her tone of voice that her stomach was too tiny and helpless to cope with that vast quantity of food"

(176). However, towards the end of the novel, Atwood aligns Marian with the fallen woman: she commits infidelity and she eats heartily.

Initially, Marian has a healthy relationship with food, which she considers nourishing and restorative. In the novel's opening scene, Marian chooses to eat tomato juice, an egg, and white bread for breakfast, symbolic representations of the feminine body: menstrual blood, ovum, and flesh. The first-person narration suggests Marian's relative comfort with her gender and the cannibalistic consumption of these symbolic foods. Further, food in this scene is not only a means of survival but also a cure. Marian compares herself to her roommate Ainsley who "had a hangover, which put me in a cheerful mood – it made me feel so healthy – and I poured her a glass of tomato juice and briskly fixed her an Alka-Seltzer, listening and making sympathetic noises while she complained" (3). Marian's physical health is intimately connected to and informs her sense of herself as a good person. In this brief communion between Ainsley and Marian, Marian plays the role of caregiver. Like a mother, she nurtures Ainsley with a wholesome, low-calorie drink, resembling blood, and congratulates herself on her own moral correctness and constitution. At this point in the novel, Marian perceives food's nutritive function. She tells Ainsley, "'You'd better eat something before you go to work'. . . 'It's better when you've got something on your stomach'" (4). The healing nature of food in this scene contrasts the malignant transformations it undergoes as the novel progresses, becoming something that does not improve physical and mental functioning but instead is a "polluting object" (Kristeva 75) and source of fear. Kristeva writes that "food becomes abject only if it is a border between two distinct entities or territories" (75). For Marian, food opens the borders between human and nonhuman and between the self-contained and the grotesque body.

Although several critics have noted Marian's fear of and disgust towards the female body, none read her perceptions in light of Bakhtin's portrayal of the grotesque, in particular its socially participative and regenerative qualities, and its rolling terrain, both of which relate to disturbances to subjectivity. In *Rabelais and his World*, Bakhtin defines the grotesque body in François Rabelais' works as a generative force of renewal. In these works, Bakhtin writes,

The material bodily principle in grotesque realism is offered in its all-popular festive and utopian aspect. The cosmic, social, and bodily elements are given here as an indivisible whole. And this whole is gay and gracious.

In grotesque realism, therefore, the bodily element is deeply positive. It is presented not in a private, egotistic form, severed from the other spheres of life, but as something universal, representing all the people. . . . This is why all that is bodily becomes grandiose, exaggerated, immeasurable. (19)

Bakhtin's celebratory, anti-authoritarian, and "immeasurable" social body is the same body that disturbs doctors, dieticians, fashion editors, and eventually Marian. The woman's body in the 1960s becomes a symbol of the larger body of an indulgent nation of consumers. The body that is "continually growing and renewed," which escapes the strict, normalizing measurements that form conceptions of the modern feminine subject, was a source of repulsion in the 1960s.

Bakhtin's conception of the grotesque body opposes the composed, classical body that modern doctors and dieticians revered. Bakhtin writes,

The new historic sense that penetrates [grotesque images] gives these images a new meaning but keeps intact their traditional contents: copulation, pregnancy, birth, growth, old age, disintegration, dismemberment. All these in their direct material aspect are the main element in the system of grotesque images. They are contrary to the classic images

of the finished, completed man, cleansed, as it were, of all the scoriae of birth and development. (25)

For Marian, it is not only the grotesque body's sheer magnitude that frightens her but also its distortions, its evocation of gluttony, and its fated participation in a cycle of consumption and production. Bakhtin's description of the openly indulgent and inexhaustible body signifies "eating" as one of its primary means of subsistence and expansion.

Women's bodies and behaviors populate most of the grotesque scenes in the novel. The first example of the grotesque female body is Marian's description of the landlady's daughter who lives downstairs: "She is a hulking creature of fifteen or so" (6). Marian's speculative assessment of the girl's character in light of her bulky physique, "I'm sure she's really quite normal," stresses that her appearance is not: "[T]here's something cretinous about the hair-ribbon perched up on top of her gigantic body" (6). The adjectives "hulking" and "cretinous" communicate Marian's disgust with what she perceives to be a large or overgrown body, a "creature" much like Frankenstein's monster, both in terms of physique and intellect. The characterization of the landlady's daughter echoes Atwood's poem "The Landlady" in her 1969 collection *The Animals in that Country*. The speaker describes the undeniable physical existence of the woman who lives below, describing her in terms of her size and her flesh:

She is a bulk, a knot
swollen in space.

.....

She stands there, a raucous fact
blocking my way:
immutable, a slab

of what is real,

solid as bacon. (24-25, 31-35)

The polysemous word “knot” may refer to her body as an intertwined rope, as “a hard lump in an animal body . . . a swelling or protuberance in a muscle, nerve, gland, etc.,” or as “a thickened part or protuberance in the tissue of a plant; an excrescence on a stem, branch, or root; a node on a stem, esp. when of swollen form” (OED). The latter definition resonates with Atwood’s botanical portrayal of Clara as a “bulbous tuber” (29) or Lucy as having “a springtime green bump or nodule forming beneath the careful golden calyx of her hair” (194). The simile “solid as bacon” aligns the landlady’s body with food, a connection that informs the characterization of women’s bodies in *The Edible Woman* such as Mrs. Gundridge’s “ham-like bulge of thigh” (194). The landlady is inescapable, as her presence cannot be negated. She is “blocking my way: / immutable,” yet despite her hyperbolic qualities, “a bulk . . . swollen in space,” her threatening presence is “real.” Similar to the grotesque body, she defies abstraction.

Whereas the size of the landlady in Atwood’s poem is unrelated to her reproductive capacity, Marian’s friend Clara, and later Ainsley, stand for the representation of pregnancy as a display of grotesque femininity. Beauvoir writes of the disgust, or abjection, “man” may feel towards the swollen belly and the embryo it contains: “This quivering jelly which is elaborated in the womb (the womb, secret and sealed like the tomb) evokes too clearly the soft viscosity of carrion for him not to turn shuddering away. Wherever life is in the making – germination, fermentation – it arouses disgust because it is made only in being destroyed; the slimy embryo begins the cycle that is completed in the putrefaction of death” (135). Clara’s slimness epitomizes the disciplined and civilized body, whereas her pregnant shape embodies the

grotesque, debased form that surrenders to the natural cycle of growth and eventual decay. Clara, once “a tall fragile girl . . . everyone’s ideal of translucent perfume-advertisement femininity” (34), is defeated by her pregnant body. Marian describes Clara as a young college student and now as a mother. Her passivity reflects her inability to govern her own body:

Clara simply had no practicality, she wasn’t able to control the more mundane aspects of life, like money or getting to lectures on time. . . . Her messiness wasn’t actively creative . . . it was passive. She simply stood helpless while the tide of dirt rose around her, unable to stop it or evade it. The babies were like that too; her own body seemed somehow beyond her, going its own way without reference to any directions of hers. (35)

Unable to manage her insurgent body, Clara surrenders to a physical and mental weakness that Marian fears. Atwood comically presents Clara as an example of the ideal model of femininity whose body nonetheless takes on grotesque qualities as a result of pregnancy. Marian imagines Clara’s swollen belly as a vegetable mass that eclipses the rest of her. Paradoxically, although Clara’s baby is a part of her body, it threatens to bury her: “The pregnancy had gone first one week, then two weeks longer than it was supposed to, and Clara had sounded over the phone as though she herself was being dragged slowly down into the gigantic pumpkin-like growth that was enveloping her body” (130). Marian’s earlier description of Clara throws the disparity between the large, grotesque and the thin, civilized body into even greater contrast: “Clara’s body is so thin that her pregnancies are always bulgingly obvious, and now in her seventh month she looked like a boa-constrictor that has swallowed a watermelon. Her head, with its aureole of pale hair, was made to seem smaller and even more fragile by the contrast” (29). As Howells notes, “Clara represents woman’s passive fulfillment of her biological destiny” (45). Her

“aureole of pale hair” alludes to the sanctity of her pregnancy. Whereas this biological imperative is indeed celebrated and venerated by Clara, Ainsley, and by medical authorities such as Dr. Stern, Marian feels threatened by the ability of women’s bodies to transform so readily and so dramatically. Although Marian is neither pregnant nor overweight, it is the volatile potential of her body to grow that kindles her anxiety towards both the fecund figure and food.

Marian imagines that Clara’s mind and body exist in a complementary relationship: as Clara’s body swells uncontrollably, her intellect dwindles as a result. When Marian visits Clara in the hospital after she gives birth, Marian thinks,

now Clara was deflating toward her normal size again she would be able to talk with her more freely: she would no longer feel as though she was addressing a swollen mass of flesh with a tiny pinhead, a shape that had made her think of a queen-ant, bulging with the burden of an entire society, a semi-person – or sometimes, she thought, several people, a cluster of hidden personalities that she didn’t know at all. (130)

The image of a “tiny pinhead,” symbolic of shrunken intellect, dwarfed by a “swollen mass of flesh” represents the denigration of the maternal body. Further, the description of Clara’s body like that of a queen-ant, “bulging with the burden of an entire society,” is a characterization of the grotesque feminine body as a social, rather than individual, entity (Bakhtin), as the body of the queen ant contains all of the offspring for the entire colony.

The first grotesque scene related to food occurs when Marian and the three “office virgins” (16) go out to lunch. Marian describes the diners in the restaurant as

stolid breadfaced businessmen most of them, gobbling their food and swilling a few drinks to get the interruption of lunch over with as soon and as numbly as possible so they could get back to the office and make some money and get that

over with as soon as possible and get back through the rush hour traffic to their homes and wives and dinners and to get those over with as soon as possible too.

(126)

The men with inflated, doughy faces participate in a scene of modern gluttony, where food and drink are merely substances that by the necessity of basic survival and modern efficiency must be consumed in a timely manner. The scene causes Marian to lose her appetite unexpectedly: “Marian was surprised at herself. She had been dying to go for lunch, she had been starving, and now she wasn’t even hungry” (127). The displacement of the word “dying” to “starving” in the non-restrictive clause ominously suggests the inevitable reality that Marian may soon face: starving to death. However, the alternative for Marian is participation in what she perceives as a scene of mindless indulgence.

The images of the landlady’s daughter and Clara’s physical metamorphosis return to haunt Marian later in the novel. When Marian and Peter go for a romantic dinner, the chapter opens with her gazing at a reflection of herself in the spoon that mirrors her descriptions of the landlady’s daughter as “hulking” and Clara as a queen ant: “Marian gazed down at the small silvery image reflected in the bowl of the spoon: herself upside down, with a huge torso narrowing to a pinhead at the handle end” (169). She feels grateful that the lights in the restaurant are dimmed, which she reasons is “[p]robably to keep people from seeing each other very clearly while they were eating. After all, chewing and swallowing are pleasanter for those doing them than for those watching, she thought, and observing one’s partner too closely might dispel the aura of romance that the restaurant was trying to maintain. Or create” (171). Although Marian agrees that embodied actions ruin romantic fictions, Atwood ironically alters romantic conventions and describes Marian’s eating in detail: “Marian was so hungry she would have

liked to devour the steak at one gulp. She began slicing and chewing, conveying the food to her grateful stomach. . . . She gnawed thoughtfully through a tough piece, and swallowed” (172). The fictional “aura of romance” (171) destroyed by eating aligns with Atwood’s motive in this novel, which is to puncture romance by depicting people, especially women, eating – an activity largely absent from earlier texts of the realist genre (Michie 13) and from *Chatelaine* in the 1960s.

In this scene, a gruesome revelation visits Marian, corrupting picturesque ideas of romantic dining. As she watches Peter “operating on the steak” (174), she recalls the diagram of a cow on the cover of a cookbook with trace lines that divide it up according to the different cuts. This apportioned cow recalls a drawing in a *Chatelaine* article on cosmetic surgery that depicts [the image of] an ancient sculpture of a woman with points marking sections of the body that can be tightened and corrected with surgery in order to render a body acceptable, or consumable, to society (Buxton 34). Breaking through the numb and “stolid” (126) consumption epitomized by the businessmen, Marian awakens to the reality of the food in front of her: “She looked down at her own half-eaten steak and suddenly saw it as a hunk of muscle. Blood red. Part of a real cow that once moved and ate and was killed, knocked on the head as it stood in a queue like someone waiting for a streetcar. Of course everyone knew that. But most of the time you never thought about it” (175). The “it” refers to the similitude between animals and humans that modern marketing techniques conceal. As John Lauber writes of modern marketing, “The reality of meat has been hidden by its packaging. Unreality is the basic principle of the consumer society” (26). Marian’s narrative digresses as she considers the nature of the meat on her plate:

In the supermarket they had it all pre-packaged in cellophane, with name-labels and price-labels stuck on it, and it was just like buying a jar of peanut butter or a

can of beans, and even when you went into a butcher shop they wrapped it up so efficiently and quickly that it was made clean, official. But now it was suddenly there in front of her with no intervening paper, it was flesh and blood, rare, and she had been devouring it. Gorging herself on it. (175)

For the first time, Marian sees through the “clean, official” packaging that sanitizes the meat’s gory essence. The “intervening paper” is symbolic of the artificial nature of modern marketing techniques. It is also symbolic of metaphor, which veils the true nature of a word, feeling, or concept. Atwood tends to strip away metaphor at the same time as she uses it.

Marian’s sudden empathy with the cow and Atwood’s use of meat as a metaphor for the female body reflect modern depictions of women’s bodies as marketable and edible objects. The *Chatelaine* advertisement for Swift’s Premium meats that features a man pulling a strip of bacon from a plate held by his wife depicts a romantic, but cannibalistic, fiction (62-63). Kilgour warns how “the desire to become one with another slides easily into an act of aggression” (8), even cannibalism. As Theodor Reik puts it, “A lover can well say to his sweetheart that he would like to eat her up and thus express his tender desire for incorporation” (qtd. in Kilgour 7). After the true nature of the steak is revealed to Marian, scenes of affection in the novel are interpreted by the reader as having menacing implications of cannibalism. For example, Peter’s behavior towards Marian earlier in the novel dramatizes this violence. In a playful gesture, Peter bites her shoulder: “I recognized this as a signal for irresponsible gaiety: Peter doesn’t usually bite. I bit his shoulder in return” (67). The “signal for irresponsible gaiety” (67) transforms into a menacing symbol of ownership for Marian as she begins to imagine that Peter’s true intention is to devour her. As the novel progresses, Marian’s body unconsciously makes the connection between the commodification and consumption of meat and that of women.

Atwood deflates the expected exaltation that an engagement might typically beget. Marian's image of Peter evolves from one of a man who is "ordinariness raised to perfection, like the youngish well-groomed faces of cigarette ads" (65-66) to a "dark intent marksman . . . a homicidal maniac with a lethal weapon in his hands" (288) the evening of their engagement party. The scene where Peter proposes is a turning point in the novel, as in the next chapter she begins to perceive herself in the third person. During the proposal, the imagery suggests a spider, Peter, successfully capturing and preparing to devour his prey, Marian. When she and Peter press their foreheads together, she "gaz[es] into a multitude of eyes" (91) when she tells him, "'You've got eight eyes'" (91), suggesting both a spider and an Oktomat camera, a suitable image for Peter, whose passion is photography. Similar to a spider preparing to devour its prey, he swallows and tightens his grip: "I could feel his neck swallow. I couldn't tell now whether it was his body or my own that was shuddering; he tightened his arms around me. 'How do you think we'd get on as . . . how do you think we'd be, married?'" (91). The scene, which mimics the engagement scene in *Jane Eyre*, closes with a portentous and "tremendous electric blue flash" (92) of lightning. Gazing into the eyes of her captor, she perceives herself as "small and oval, mirrored in his eyes" (92). The specular imagery conveys the idea that the male gaze not only looks out but also reflects the viewer back to herself, only duplicated, smaller and more helpless. Peter's grotesque transformation is a symptom of Marian's paranoia and self-identification as an object.

Besides food, another consumer item through which Marian expresses her fear of the mature body is the girdle. A girdle advertisement and Marian's newly purchased girdle situate the novel within its historical context, yet girdles exist in the novel as symbols for feminine practices of self-restraint. Duncan's inquisitive pleasure at perceiving "a real one!" (296), and his

desire to understand its mechanics depreciate the romantic allure the advertisements create. Like a scientist, “[h]e sat up in bed to examine it, stretching it all of its three ways and flexing the bones. ‘God, how medieval,’ he said. ‘How can you stand it? Do you have to wear one all the time?’ He spoke of it as though it was some kind of unpleasant but necessary surgical appliance: a brace or a truss” (296), which to the outside observer it may appear to be. Advertisements similar to those in *Chatelaine* shape Marian’s perception of herself as in need of slimming and heighten her anxiety towards her physical shape. When Marian rides the bus early in the novel, she “would rather look at the advertisements” (9) than talk to Ainsley. Although she is aware of advertisements’ fictive and deceptive nature, she nevertheless is not immune to their representations of femininity.

The second time Marian takes the bus, she notices a girdle advertisement: “I concentrated on one of the posters above the windows, a colorful one of a young woman with three pairs of legs skipping about in her girdle. I must admit to being, against my will, slightly scandalized by those advertisements. They are so public” (105). She expresses skepticism towards the persuasive power of the ad: “I wondered for the first few blocks what sort of person would have enough response to that advertisement to go and buy the object in question, and whether there had ever been a survey done on it” (105). Considering her job at the marketing agency, the latter of her reflections are expected. However, the former half of the statement foreshadows irony, as Marian does end up buying “the object in question” later in the novel for Peter’s party. Marian deconstructs the advertisement:

The female form, I thought, is supposed to appeal to men, not to women, and men don’t usually buy girdles. Though perhaps the lithe young woman was a self-image;

perhaps the purchasers thought they were getting their own youth and slenderness back in the package. (105)

In this passage, Marian undermines the persuasive power of the advertisement to construct an ideal type. She astutely recognizes how it functions to sell a product and how it reduces women to immaculate two-dimensional images. When out to dinner with Peter, Len, and Ainsley, she compares herself to a lifeless and malleable paper image: Peter “was treating me as a stage-prop; silent but solid, a two-dimensional outline” (77). Stein explains that “in contrast to the unpredictable, messy, changeable bodies of real people, billboard and advertising images are clean and beautiful” (47). Atwood herself is attuned to advertising’s deceptive imagery. In a poem describing a travel brochure that includes “several very shiny illustrations” (“Circe/Mud” 52), she identifies the brochure’s repressed contents: “They leave out the insects and the castaway bottles but so would I in their place; all advertisements are slanted, including this one” (52). However, as Marian knows, advertising is not entirely purified of its repressed content, as the image of a young slim woman may conjure ideas of its opposite, its double, in the imagination of its beholders.

Despite Marian’s skeptical and informed reading of the advertisement, the image of the young woman in the ad slowly invades her consciousness. Eleonora Rao writes of the novel that “the absurd comic situations it creates are played against an authentic representation of Toronto in the 1960s. The comic scenes can suddenly become serious and sinister, and the light-hearted comedy turns into bitter criticism of the life and values of the sixties” (47). Marian’s intellectual diversion with the advertisement turns to anxious self-assessment: “For the rest of the journey I thought about middle-aged spread: when would I get it? – maybe I already had it. You have to be careful about things like that, I reflected; they have a way of creeping up on you before you

know it” (105). Her fear of “middle-aged spread” (105) is symptomatic of the cultural obsession with and fear of this bodily phenomenon as well as her fear of what she is to become. The word “creeping” (105) suggests a menacing presence, reminiscent of the ““creeping poundage”” (17) in the Libby’s Calorie Master advertisement. Marian’s mind begins to dissociate from her body. Her own flesh suddenly becomes an ominous and unpredictable force that threatens both her youth and her sense of security.

In Part Two of the novel, Atwood shifts the narrative voice from first to third person to represent Marian’s split self, the dissociation between her mind and her body, which results in the temporary loss of an authorial voice. Unlike the assertive tone at the closing of Part 1, “I must get organized. I have a lot to do” (118), Marian now “was sitting listlessly at her desk. She was doodling on the pad for telephone messages” (121). Several weeks later, Marian realizes that she cannot eat meat that shows evident signs of its former life: “Whatever it was that had been making these decisions, not her mind certainly, rejected anything that had an indication of bone or tendon or fibre” (177). She reasons,

Things that had been ground up and re-shaped, hot-dogs, and hamburgers for instance, or lamb patties or pork sausages, were all right as long as she didn’t look at them too closely, and fish was still permitted. She had been afraid to try chicken: she had been fond of it once, but it came with an unpleasantly complete skeletal structure, and the skin, she predicted, would be too much like an arm with goose bumps (177).

Marian begins to articulate the connection between meat and the human body, finding that the consumption of animals resembles cannibalism, a cultural taboo, too closely. Atwood’s frequent use of similes in the novel such as “like an arm with goose bumps” holds particular importance,

as Atwood's similes in the novel often reflect Marian's phobia. It is the similarity between edible matter and women that frightens.

As Marian becomes aware of her position within the social process of production and consumption, she becomes increasingly wary of her environment, in particular food. Initially a realistic prop in the novel that causes Marian little distress, food emerges into the foreground as it comes alive, much like a character, and shapes the narrative progression of the story. On this issue, Foucault speaks to the threatened subject's troublesome relationship with surrounding elements. The secure body that belongs to what Foucault calls an "ethics of control" (*Care of the Self* 65) is constantly threatened by the earthly matter that composes the grotesque or abject body. In the novel, Atwood represents femininity and indulgence in food as untidy, as something that weakens the boundaries of the self. After Marian's revelation at the restaurant, both food and her body become considerable antagonistic forces in the plot. As she searches her cookbook for an acceptable recipe, "[t]he quiet fear, that came nearer to the surface now as she scanned the pages . . . was that this thing, this refusal of her mouth to eat, was malignant; that it would spread; that slowly the circle now dividing the non-devourable from the devourable would become smaller and smaller, that the objects available to her would be excluded one by one" (178). Marian's mouth, the border between the outside world and her self, affirms its protective function to seal off and preserve her body and self from its edible assailants.

Concurrent with her gradual loss of control over her own body, Marian's representations of the grotesque adopt an urgent and more personal tone. Whereas her descriptions of the landlady's daughter and Clara presented some distance between them and herself, her subsequent perceptions of the grotesque social body directly threaten her sense of identity. The women in Marian's office most powerfully represent the grotesque element of femininity. Similar to the

landlady in Atwood's poem, these women confront Marian with their bodily existence, as she is, for example, "pressed against the more-than-ample bosom of Mrs. Gundridge" (195). Mrs. Gundridge's figure exceeds even the limits of excess, as she is "more-than-ample." Marian's fear of the grotesque female body climaxes at the office Christmas party. Inversely to her personification of meat, she now describes Mrs. Grot as a composite of flesh, bones, and restrictive undergarments: "Mrs. Grot was standing up, and the assemblage of vertebrae, inflexible corsetry, and desk-oriented musculature that provided Mrs. Grot with her vertical structure would not allow her to bend very far over" (188). The office party, similar to the restaurant at lunchtime, represents the modern abundance of food that doctors and dieticians in *Chatelaine* blamed for women's ample weight. Similar to their characterization of abundant food as a source of temptation, Marian disapproves of rather than celebrates the cornucopia: "The food was heaped on the table that stood at one end of the lunchroom – much more food than they needed really, salads and sandwiches and fancy breads and desserts and cookies and cakes" (189). Contrary to the "glutinous murmurs of consent" (190) that filled the office at word of a ladies-only feast, Marian appears to be the only woman at the party who observes the scene with distaste: "The loaded table made her feel gluttonous: all that abundance, all those meringues and icings and glazes, those coagulations of fats and sweets, that proliferation of rich glossy food" (192). Even more so than the diet articles in *Chatelaine* that portray rich foods as a temptation to be avoided, Marian senses that they are a danger to be feared.

The distinction between the female bodies in the room and the food that burdens the table blurs as Atwood's metaphor of woman as food nears its apex. Slowly, the scene morphs into a grotesque display of femininity. Marian observes Lucy, one of the few women at the party who still emanates grace and civility only to realize that Lucy's body, too, is subject to

metamorphosis: “Thin, elegant Lucy, sitting beside her, was merely at an earlier stage, a springtime green bump or nodule forming beneath the careful golden calyx of her hair” (194). The description of Lucy moves beyond simile and becomes metaphor: her body *is* a plant. Such a body matches Bakhtin’s description of the grotesque. He identifies sprouts and buds as evidence of the grotesque body, “which retains only its excrescences and orifices” (“The Grotesque Image” 93). Marian compares Lucy to the other women at the party who had “ripened: became mature” (194). Notably, Marian immediately associates maturity with fatness: “Dresses for the mature figure,” she thinks, “In other words, fat” (194). Similar to these women, to Clara, and soon to Ainsley, Lucy’s body will inevitably grow and transform into what Marian finds an inhuman and unsightly shape.

In the same way that Marian’s steak assumes abject properties, at the party Marian sees past pleasantly packaged surface appearances and perceives the grotesque reality of female bodies:

[Marian] examined the women’s bodies with interest, critically, as though she had never seen them before. And in a way she hadn’t, they had just been there like everything else . . . But now she could see the roll of fat pushed up across Mrs. Gundridge’s back by the top of her corset, the ham-like bulge of thigh, the creases round the neck, the large porous cheeks; the blotch of varicose veins glimpsed at the back of one plump crossed leg, the way her jowls jellied when she chewed, her sweater a woolly teacosy over those rounded shoulders; and the others too, similar in structure but with varying proportions and textures of bumpy permanents and dune-like contours of breast and waist and hip; their fluidity sustained somewhere within by bones, without by a carapace of clothing and

makeup. What peculiar creatures they were; and the continual flux between the outside and the inside, taking things in, giving them out... (194)

The women's bodies, in this scene, epitomize the grotesque. Bakhtin writes that "the grotesque image displays not only the outward but also the inner features of the body: blood, bowels, heart and other organs. The outward and inward features are often merged into one" (*Rabelais* 318). Their bloated features are three-dimensional masses that fluctuate like living machines of consumption and production. Marian, who declares that she is interested in appearances – "I've always been influenced by appearances" (34) – acquires a new vision, allowing her to perceive not only the women's "carapace of clothing and makeup" but also the plump rolling terrain of their bodies that are marked with signs of ageing as well as the food that they eat. Marian's vision is expressed in the language used to describe women's bodies in the 1960s. Her "critical" (194) observation of the "ham-like bulge of thigh" (194) echoes *Chatelaine's* warning about "dumpling knees" (Dollery 34) in "Knee Knack." Notably, the word "ham-like" (194) to describe Mrs. Gundridge's thigh denotes a consumable product instead of the living animal itself. Referring to the women as "peculiar creatures," Marian suggests that they, like Frankenstein's monster, are not quite human. Yet, as her fear grows, she comes to realize that they are not unlike her.

Initially, Marian "examine[s]" (194) the women as entities separate from her self. Yet, in a moment of clarity at the office party, "she felt them, their identities, almost their substance, pass over her head like a wave. At some time she would be – or no, already she was like that too: she was one of them, her body the same, identical, merged with that other flesh that choked the air in the flowered room with its sweet organic scent; she felt suffocated by this thick Sargasso Sea of femininity" (195). The notion of the body as a "banquet for all the world" (*Rabelais* 19)

horrifies Marian. She perceives the women's identities as a "substance" that is frighteningly corporeal and obtrusive. Yet, what frightens her further is that the resolution to her existential crisis presents itself: "she was one of them, her body the same, identical." Whereas the banquet typically celebrates food and indulgence, the office party for Marian is a scene of comic terror.

Marian's body senses that it is threatened and in an effort at self-preservation, she attempts to protect herself from the "thick Sargasso-Sea of femininity" (195) that surrounds her. The theme of self-preservation in the midst of a messy and threatening habitat frequents Atwood's writing. In "A Fortification," she imagines the body as a metal spacesuit: "I have armed myself, yes I am safe: safe: / . . . I am barriered from leaves and blood" (9,12). Atwood envisions safety as being fortified against "leaves and blood" (12), symbolic of life, the passage of time, decay, and death. Foucault's image of a "citadel protected by its ramparts" (Foucault 65) or the "clean and proper self" (Kristeva 8) provides a useful conception of the ideal body and self as an impervious and secure entity amidst unstable and invasive forces. Marian tries to rescue herself in order to become what Foucault describes as "a harbour sheltered from the tempests" (*Care of the Self* 65):

She drew a deep breath, clenching her body and her mind back into her self like some tactile sea-creature withdrawing its tentacles; she wanted something solid, clear: a man; she wanted Peter in the room so that she could put her hand out and hold on to him to keep from being sucked down. Lucy had a gold bangle on one arm. Marian focussed her eyes on it, concentrating on it as though she was drawing its hard gold circle around herself, a fixed barrier between herself and that liquid amorphous other. (195)

In this figurative passage, Marian struggles to isolate herself from these "peculiar creatures" (194) that threaten her. The image of a "tactile sea-creature" (195) recalls an earlier scene where

“she found her mouth closing together like a frightened sea-anemone” (187) when she tried to eat an egg. Peter represents masculine rationality and detachment, and the “hard gold circle” symbolizes matrimony. In an effort to regain her sense of self, Marian’s body, like the “hard gold circle . . . [the] fixed barrier” (195) of the bangle, attempts to preserve itself from the grotesque realm of the “liquid amorphous other” (195). Here, Peter is envisioned as the heroic “rescuer from chaos, a provider of stability” (100) amidst a maelstrom of femininity. In a later scene in the novel when Marian is in the bath preparing for her engagement party, she panics and experiences her body dissociating from her mind and disintegrating “like a piece of cardboard in a gutter puddle” (256). To prevent her self from falling apart, she puts her “engagement ring back onto her finger, seeing the hard circle for a moment as a protective talisman that would help keep her together” (256).

Similar to the body, spoken language in the novel functions as a medium of potential deluge. The unfinished list that pours forth from Marian’s imagination imitates the “blur of meaningless syllables” (192) that fill the room. Earlier in the novel, when Len, Peter, Ainsley, and Marian get together for drinks, Marian hesitates whether or not she should expose Ainsley’s façade to secure Len as a father for her baby in order to “fulfill[] [her] deepest femininity” (41). Marian opts to repress her sentiments: “If I wasn’t going to take deliberate steps, I’d have to be sure of my self-control so I wouldn’t say anything by accident” (74). Marian’s attempts to monitor herself thus express how excess language, like food, threatens to destabilize the self. Similar to Ethel Gillingham’s mask that prevents her from sneaking food while baking, whether on purpose or by accident, Marian “take[s] deliberate steps” (74) to master her urges. As Duncan inundates Marian with confessional words one evening at the laundromat, Marian thinks, “[A]ll this talking, this rather liquid confessing, was something I didn’t think I could ever bring myself

to do. It seemed foolhardy to me, like an uncooked egg deciding to come out of its shell: there would be a risk of spreading out too far, turning into a formless puddle” (112). Marian’s personification of an egg foreshadows her perception of food and of bodies as soulful agents, driving her imperative to empathize with yet also to fear them. Further, the words “spreading out too far” and “formless puddle” reflect her escalating anxiety towards “middle-aged spread” (105) exemplified by Clara and the women in the office.

Marian’s final encounter with the grotesque body occurs when she escapes Peter’s party and spends the night at a hotel with Duncan. Duncan’s vision of Marian’s body mirrors her own vision of the misshapen female body: “‘I feel like some kind of little stunted creature crawling over the surface of a huge mass of flesh. Not that you’re fat,’ he added, ‘you aren’t. There’s just altogether too much flesh around here. It’s suffocating’” (297). The surplus of matter that Duncan perceives is reminiscent of Mrs. Gundryge’s “more-than-ample bosom” (195). Bakhtin describes the surface of the grotesque as mountainous and cavernous, as opposed to the “closed, smooth, and impenetrable surface of the [classical] body” (“The Grotesque Body” 93), recalling Marian’s description, for example, of the “dune-like contours of breast and waist and hip” (194) at the Christmas party or her own body as “islanded, extending in a series of curves and hollows down towards the terminal peninsula of legs and the reefs of toes”(255). The discomfort with such bodily terrain justifies Duncan’s compulsive ironing. When Marian asks him why he does it, he answers, “God knows it isn’t because I’m neat and tidy; but there’s something about a flat surface” (164). In the hotel, Duncan’s ironing is transposed from Marian’s clothes to her body itself: “He stroked her with his hand, gently, straightening her out, almost as though he was ironing her” (298), flattening the topographic relief of her body.

In *The Edible Woman*, Atwood uses grotesque realism to speak of the body in a way that corrupts the modern conception of the pristine subject visible in advertising as well as in the synthetic edible products that line supermarket shelves. Bakhtin writes that the function of grotesque realism is to parody canonical notions of gentility, to “degrade, bring down to earth, turn their subject into flesh” (*Rabelais* 20). In *The Female Grotesque*, Mary Russo characterizes the grotesque body and the civilized body as opposed:

The images of the grotesque body are precisely those which are abjected from the bodily canons of classical aesthetics. The classical body is transcendent and monumental, closed, static, self-contained, symmetrical, and sleek; it is identified with the ‘high’ or official culture of the Renaissance and later, with the rationalism, individualism, and normalizing aspirations of the bourgeoisie. The grotesque body is open, protruding, irregular, secreting, multiple, and changing; it is identified with non-official ‘low’ culture. (8)

The Renaissance culture that dichotomizes the classical and the grotesque still functions as a dominant ideology in the 1960s. The methods of evaluation and of interpellation used by doctors and dieticians function according to “rationalism, individualism, and normalizing aspirations” (8) toward upper-middle class notions of refinement. Unlike the merriment and vivacity associated with depictions of the grotesque in Rabelais, the grotesque elements in Atwood’s novel reflect modern anxieties towards indulgence, in women in particular. Although Marian’s perceptions of female bodies aligns with the “normalizing aspirations” (8) of modern ideology, Atwood’s novel nevertheless contaminates the sterile, two-dimensional cultural icons modern society reveres. By revealing the body’s subtext, what lies beneath surface appearances, Atwood unveils the

deceptive and dehumanizing imperative of consumer culture to conceal both the nature of bodies and of food.

Part Two: “Gay Rebellion”: Creativity and Consumption in *The Edible Woman*

I will now turn to the penultimate scenes of the novel, when Marian purchases the ingredients for, prepares, and serves the woman-shaped cake to Peter, eats it herself, and later serves it to Duncan. Marian appropriates the feminine act of baking; her “creation” (427) is a satirical manifestation of her own subliminal fears. The notion that women prepare and serve food for their children or husbands but must not taste it persists in the baking product advertisements discussed in Chapter Two. Atwood reverses this gendered interaction when Peter refuses Marian’s creation, and Marian eventually eats. Atwood’s representation challenges not only modern stereotypes of the sacrificial wife but also common literary depictions of heroines that she inherits as an author. The climactic and closing scenes in *The Edible Woman* borrow tropes from 1960s kitchen culture yet subtly mock their romantic narrative. In what follows, first, I briefly explore Marian’s shopping trip. Second, I analyze her use of ingredients, her cooking maneuvers, and her emotional expressions in the kitchen and interpret them as what Certeau terms “tactics,” the manipulation of “events in order to turn them into ‘opportunities’” (xix) for creative resistance, which in Marian’s case both enacts yet also subverts traditional feminine practice. Third, I read Marian’s presentation of the cake to Peter as an imaginative parody of baking advertisements. Last, I focus on the scene where Marian finally eats, and enjoys, her sweet creation.

Marian’s self-control gradually returns towards the end of the novel. When she invites Peter over for tea the evening after his party, “she made her voice sweet, conciliatory” like cake. Marian “was conscious of her own craftiness. Though she hadn’t made any decisions she could feel she was about to make one and she needed time” (314). The word “craftiness” implies both

her “aptitude in handicraft,” in this case at cake baking and decorating, as well as “artfulness and deceiving” (OED). Gradually, Atwood reveals Marian’s forthcoming decision, and it becomes clear that Marian will confront Peter:

What she needed was something that avoided words, she didn’t want to get tangled up in a discussion. Some way she could know what was real: a test, simple and direct as litmus-paper. . . . She went out to the kitchen and sat down at the table to make herself a list, but threw down the pencil after she had written several words. She knew what she needed to get. (315)

In Chapter Two, I briefly explored the way in which *Chatelaine* responded to women’s anxieties in the supermarkets, as they faced a “dizzying array of processed foods” (Levenstein 114). The magazine encouraged women to write lists, buy only what they need, and educate themselves as consumers. Whereas earlier in the novel Marian “defend[s] herself with lists” (201) and wanders along the aisles “pushing her cart like a somnambulist” (201), she now leaves the apartment without a list and travels “methodically up and down the aisles” (315) with purpose. Jayne Patterson observes how Marian’s first shopping trip contains “no verbs which imply choice or desire” (153). Her attention to the food brands and packaging rather than the contents themselves reflects her lack of control over the objects in her environment. However, by the second shopping trip, Marian moves from “a puppet to a person who both acquires what she wants and rejects that which she does not want. . . . [S]he is now capable of imposing structure upon the consumer world rather than having it impose its structure upon her” (153, 156). Rather than purchase a modern and convenient commodity such as a cake mix, Marian buys ingredients to make the cake from scratch such as “eggs. Flour. Lemons for the flavour. Sugar, icing-sugar, vanilla, salt, food-colouring. . . . Chocolate – no, cocoa, that would be better. A glass tube full of

round silver decorations. ... Lucky, she thought, they sell almost everything in supermarkets these days” (315). Marian’s use of basic ingredients indicates her willingness to participate in a mode of cooking associated with traditional femininity. She expresses gratitude towards the abundance of goods in supermarkets rather than apprehension, confusion, or indecision. Although Ainsley accuses her of “rejecting [her] femininity” (321), the practice of baking a cake from scratch symbolizes Marian’s relative comfort with her womanhood. Marian’s careful attention to her gestures while baking reflect the articles and advertisements in *Chatelaine* that celebrate traditional cooking methods as a feminine art. Although she is skillful with words, “what she needed was something that avoided words, she didn’t want to get tangled up in a discussion” (315). Using the baking skills she already possesses, Marian chooses a traditionally feminine medium for creative expression, yet her intentions are not sweet.

Nowhere in the novel does Marian bake a cake, nor does she ever cook with such obvious skill and delight. In the first part of the novel, Marian prepares a frozen dinner for Peter, who asks her accusingly, “‘Why can’t you ever *cook* anything?’” (69). She represses “a sharp comment” (69), thinking instead to herself, “I was hurt: I considered this unfair. I like to cook, but I had been deliberately refraining at Peter’s for fear he would feel threatened” (69). Further, as the novel progresses, cooking becomes a frightening experience. As she prepares carrots for a salad, “She was watching her own hands and the peeler and the curl of crisp orange skin. She became aware of the carrot. It’s a root . . . it grows in the ground and sends up leaves. Then they come along and dig it up, maybe it even makes a sound, a scream too low for us to hear. . . . She thought she felt it twist in her hands. She dropped it on the table” (208). However, now Marian’s kitchen, once a source of repulsion – “what fiendishness went on in kitchens across the country,

in the name of providing food!” (180) – becomes the sacred creative space of an artist as she mixes the ingredients. She leaves the dirty dishes aside and

beg[ins] to crack the eggs . . . concentrating all her attention on the movements of her hands, and then when she was beating and sifting and folding, on the relative times and the textures. Spongecake needed a light hand. She poured the batter into the tin and drew a fork sideways through it to break the large air-bubbles. As she slid the tin into the oven she almost hummed with pleasure. It was a long time since she had made a cake. (316)

The verbs “beating,” “sifting,” and “folding” detail specialized gestures that require concentration and care. Marian’s pleasure in baking is nearly audible as she “almost hummed” (316). As she decorates the cake, she “added a row of ruffles around the neckline, and more ruffles at the hem of the dress” in a joyful “burst of exuberance” (317). As Patterson notes in her linguistic study of the novel, there are “within the three pages of narration regarding the cake making, 57 verbs directly associated with cooking, verbs which are refulgent with creativity” (160). She notes this pattern in contrast to the salad-making scene, when Marian experiences little pleasure cooking; violent verbs, such as “rubbed,” “threw,” and “tore” (208), describe her culinary gestures. Patterson also notes that “[v]ariations on the verb ‘to make’ occur 6 times in direct relation to the cake’s construction. The repetition of this verb suggests that Marian has become ‘a maker,’ Horace’s ‘vates’” (161). Atwood’s portrayal of Marian as a maker mirrors *Chatelaine*’s linguistic shift from naming women “housewives” to “homemakers” as a way to conceal the reality that, for some, the drudgery of housework hindered women’s artistic and intellectual pursuits. However, this shift also reflected the creative merit of women’s household work and the artistic potential such labor holds.

As critics have noted, Marian's maneuvers as she decorates the cake resemble surgery and are described using such language. Marian "began to operate" (317) on the cake, which lies passively like a feminine subject of science, "soft and sugary and featureless on the platter" (317), the operating table. Similar to Victor Frankenstein in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Marian engages in what Giard labels "demiurgic miniaturization" (Certeau 158), playing the part of the demiurge, creating the world on a smaller scale. Marian trims the cake as she "nipped in a waist at the sides" (317), subjecting her creation to feminine beauty rituals similar to those that she sustained, for example, in the dress shop and at the hair salon, where she is treated "like a slab of flesh, an object" (245). By adorning and fashioning the cake, Marian begins to articulate her object status, thereby becoming a subject who has acquired both the knowledge of her social situation as well as the creative energy and power to resist conformity via individual gestures. Giard articulates the creative pleasures associated with baking: "with their high degree of ritualization and their strong affective investment, culinary activities are for many women of all ages a place of happiness, pleasure, and discovery" (Certeau 151). While Giard likely refers to a loving or nurturing "affective investment" (151) in cooking, Marian's emotional investment in the cake is less innocent. In a brief scene reminiscent of *Frankenstein*, Marian reflects upon her creation: "she felt a certain pity for her creature but she was powerless now to do anything about it. Her fate had been decided" (318-19). The ambiguous pronoun "her" refers both to the short existence of the cake but also perhaps Marian's future with Peter, suggesting that she intends to frighten him away.

Whereas the advertisements for Magic Baking Powder and other baking products in *Chatelaine* often represent a fictional narrative where the wife either cooks for or serves a hungry husband, the scenario between Marian and Peter satirizes the saccharine romance

between man, woman, and cake. When Peter arrives, Marian, playing the role of the dutiful wife, hospitably asks him, “‘Peter, why don’t you go into the living room and sit down? I have a surprise for you’” (319). Marian returns with the cake, “bearing the platter in front of her, carefully and with reverence, as though she was carrying something sacred in a procession, an icon or the crown on a cushion in a play. She knelt, setting the platter on the coffee table in front of Peter” (320). The words “bearing,” “reverence,” “sacred,” “icon,” and “knelt” (320) sanctify the occasion and the cake. As Atwood writes of hunters in “The Festival,” “(it is the ceremony / they say, that gives a sacramental / meaning to butchered meat)” (10-12). Similar to the advertisements and articles in the magazine that praise the feminine practice of baking and serving a cake, Marian’s gestures and her creation hold symbolic significance. Her ironic gesture and her cake caricature the power dynamics of their relationship. Although Marian has previously insisted that language must be avoided, she explains the significance of the cake to Peter: “‘You’ve been trying to destroy me, haven’t you,’ she said. ‘You’ve been trying to assimilate me. But I’ve made you a substitute, something you’ll like much better. This is what you really wanted all along, isn’t it?’” (320). Whereas in the imaginative and romantic world of magazine advertising, the man gratefully accepts his wife’s cake, Peter “stared from the cake to her face and back again. . . . [H]e went quite rapidly, they didn’t have much of a conversation after all, he seemed embarrassed and eager to leave and even refused a cup of tea” (320). Dale Bauer points out that by “exchang[ing] her sign- status for that of manipulator of signs” (qtd. in Bouson 33), Marian regains a sense of authorship. Consequently, in Part 3 of the novel, the narrative voice returns to first person.

In an act that defies conventional representations of women eating in literature, popular representations in the 1960s, and Marian’s dietary habits up until this point in the novel, she eats

the forbidden food willingly. The symbolic weight that Marian has affixed to food dissolves: “Suddenly she was hungry. Extremely hungry. The cake after all was only a cake” (320) not an animated being. Furthermore, she enjoys the embodied experience of eating, as “her palate awakes from its dormancy” (Patterson): “She considered the first mouthful. It seemed odd but most pleasant to be actually tasting and chewing and swallowing again” (320). Marian’s enjoyment of food returns as she judges her creation, filling in for the ideal male critic: “Not bad, she thought critically; needs a touch more lemon though” (320). Marian’s “new sense of pleasure . . . reflects the notion of artistic criticism” (Patterson 165), which is typically reserved for men in baking advertisements. When she boldly “speared a chunk of pink thigh and carried it to her mouth” (321), the horror this cannibalistic act would have prompted earlier in the novel is absent. Although critics disagree as to the meaning of Atwood’s ambiguous conclusion, Marian’s jovial attitude towards cooking and eating doubtlessly celebrates both a traditional feminine art and the pleasures of consumption. Marian “can have her cake and eat it, too.” The deliberate creation and beautification of a diminutive version of herself signifies a reversal of power. Whereas throughout the novel, Marian’s conscious control over her actions and her body dwindles, she now experiences a new sense of productive determination.

Although making a “citadel” (Foucault, *Care of the Self* 65) of her self provides temporary safety for Marian, its feasibility is questionable: eventually, she must eat if she wishes to survive. Marian’s fear of the social body of glutinous production and consumption as well as her own transfiguration, characterized in the novel by the female grotesque, catalyzes her unconscious desire to halt consumption. Earlier in the novel, Ainsley registers Marian’s discomfort with the processes of both creation and destruction. Speaking of conception, “Ainsley had asked her during one of their Sunday discussions, [was she] on the side of the Creative Life

Force, or wasn't she?" (140). Marian's response, baking this cake, is affirmative. However, she does not sacrifice her own body in this creative process. Further, she eats her creation, renewing her participation in the inexorable cycle of growth and decay through which all living beings pass. At the novel's close, Duncan tells Marian, who "had a steak for lunch" (329), that she "'look[s] jaunty and full of good things'" (329). Reflecting Marian's advice to Ainsley at the beginning of the novel, Duncan's comment acknowledges food's curative properties. When Marian says humbly, "'I like to cook when I have the time'" (330), she situates herself as a willing participant in consumer culture who, nonetheless, partakes according to her own criteria.

Conclusion

In this thesis, I explore the cultural context that inspires representations of women, food, and identity in *The Edible Woman*. Rao notes that Atwood's texts present identity as an "unstable, multiple, or shifting construct" (41), which in *The Edible Woman* is enacted through the body, in particular at the boundaries that demarcate self and other, human and non-human, woman and food. Rao explains that the novel "presents a feminine identity torn between society's expectations, which demand adherence to the traditional, devalued feminine role, and the need for self-realization" (134). Marian's increasingly gothic perceptions of her surroundings and her loss of self are catalyzed by her fear of becoming tied indefinitely to the market research company and to her fiancée, Peter, and by her desire for self-realization. Although Marian's perceptions of her environment are often fantastical, they reflect a particular ideology that existed in Canada in the 1960s. A reading of *Chatelaine* uncovers an obsession with the female body and with women's eating and cooking practices. The metaphor of woman as food is not confined to this era, yet Atwood's characterizations of women as edible matter reflects similar depictions in this magazine that shaped Canadian women's attitudes in the 1960s. I uncover "assumed gender roles of the late 1950s and 1960s in urban Canada" (Sceats 95) related to food and the body through a reading of *Chatelaine* magazine in order to understand the ideological and symbolic environment from which the novel emerged and which it critiques.

A reading of *Chatelaine* reveals that in middle-class Canadian society in the 1960s women were taught to fear excess weight on their bodies. Canada's affluent post-war economy generated anxiety towards and condemnation of indulgence and overweight bodies, a fear that persists today. As doctors, dieticians, and editors writing for *Chatelaine* in the 1960s reported

new statistics and diet plans, they borrowed Christian rhetoric of temptation and sin, recalling the Fall, and salvation through self-sacrifice. The female body was often conceived as grotesque, inhuman, and in need of control. These conceptions of the female body emerge in the novel, yet they are further exaggerated and caricatured, becoming both frightening and comic. These arise from Marian's troubled vision, which is nevertheless aligned with a common cultural conception of the female body as grotesque, changeable, and edible. Rather than a protest against femininity, as asserted in some accounts of anorexia, her body's refusal to eat is an unconscious expression of self-preservation that reflects similar modes of feminine self-definition expressed in *Chatelaine's* dieting content.

Besides dieting, another means through which women were encouraged to express themselves in the 1960s was through homemaking, in particular baking. I explore articles and advertisements that focus on women's creativity in the kitchen in order to understand the cultural underpinnings of Marian's cathartic act of baking and serving a cake. An atmosphere of nostalgia for traditional culinary roles and practices existed in the magazine, likely as a reaction to new baking ingredients and technologies as well as to women's movement from the domestic to the public sphere. Marian's decision to use cake as a communicative symbol reflects a romantic narrative present in cake and baking product advertisements in the magazine. Whereas in the advertisements, a woman pleases her man with a satisfying yet standard cake, Atwood parodies this fairy-tale fiction between husband and wife. Although Marian's act of baking and serving a cake is a feminine gesture, her decision to make the cake a mirror image of herself exceeds the limits of what is deemed normal. By creating her world, rather than being created by it, Marian learns to express herself without turning against her own body.

Marian's cake is a catharsis, the "elimination of a complex by bringing it to consciousness and affording it expression" (Merriam Webster). Throughout the novel, Marian's "complex" has been the fear of becoming an edible woman, an object for consumption. The cake is the creative medium by which Marian expresses her status as consumable and perishable, and the ambivalence she feels towards her body. Beauvoir explains how the female body is both caught in its materiality yet also holds the potential to be a medium of transcendence:

Her body displays reactions for which the woman denies responsibility; . . . it escapes her control, it betrays her; it is her most intimate verity, but it is a shameful verity that she keeps hidden. And yet it is also her glorious double; she is dazzled in beholding it in the mirror; it is promised happiness, work of art, living statue; she shapes it, adorns it, puts it on show. When she smiles at herself in the glass, she forgets her carnal contingency; in the embrace of love, in maternity, her image is destroyed. But often, as she muses on herself, she is astonished to be at one and the same time that heroine and that flesh. (583)

As Beauvoir describes, Marian feels that her body "escapes her control" and "betrays" her. Indeed, at times, she keeps it hidden beneath "layers and layers of woolly clothes" (236) or clothes that are a "camouflage" (6). When she contemplates her figure, it is often with horror or amazement, such as the episode in the bathtub when she imagines her naked body as a massive stretch of land. Her body is a reminder of her "carnal contingency." Yet, at the end of the novel, she makes it into a "work of art" by displacing the image of her body onto the cake, an ambivalent expression of the body as carnal but also as a "glorious double" on display. She displays her body via the cake not only to herself but also to Peter, Duncan, Ainsley, and Fischer, who meet her creation with mixed reactions.

Although Marian's creation is a simple, impulsive, and short-lived "gesture of defiance" (Greene 111), it is a powerful and ambiguous tactic that epitomizes yet parodies her identity as a woman. The cake-lady symbolizes feminine artifice and vulnerability yet arises from a desire to express agency and authenticity in a cultural milieu that often denies women both. Douglas writes that "ambiguous symbols can be used in ritual for the same ends as they are used in poetry and mythology, to enrich meaning or to call attention to other levels of existence" (*Purity and Danger* 49). Marian's actions in the penultimate scene attests to her bizarre sense of humor, the dissolution of her engagement, the renewal of her appetite, and ultimately, her will for self-expression, all of which "call attention to other levels of existence" (49) beyond the enactment of ideal feminine behavior found in the pages of *Chatelaine*. Yet, the novel closes on a slightly ominous tone. The romantic fiction ends ironically, as Marian feeds Duncan rather than Peter. Duncan eats the cake dispassionately, "without exclamation of pleasure, even without noticeable expression" (330), thanking Marian and telling her "It was delicious" (330). Marian's reaction to Duncan resembles the placid tone of the happy housewives in *Chatelaine*, as she "smiled comfortably at him" (330). Yet, "the last green eye," (330) that "vanished, like wink" (330) deceives both the cake's and Marian's seemingly sweet and innocent appearance.

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